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Research, Character and Performance Process to Play the Role of Eva in the Pomona College Theatre Department Fall 2012 Production of Kindertransport, a Play by Diane Samuels

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In The Pomona College Theatre Department Fall 2012 Production Of

Kindertransport

A Play by Diane Samuels

Senior Acting Project & Senior Thesis

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Abstract:
This thesis paper presents the research and character development process that I undertook to play the role of Eva, in the Pomona College Fall 2012 production of Diane Samuels' award winning play, *Kindertransport.* In the ten-months prior to the 1938 outbreak of World War II, nearly 10,000 predominately Jewish children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, and Poland were evacuated to Great Britain to escape the looming Holocaust. The program was given the name, Kindertransport (children's transports) by German railway officials because only unaccompanied children under the age of 17 were allowed to leave. Once the *Kinder* arrived in England, host families took them in for what was believed to be a temporary stay. At the time, no one could have foreseen the challenges and consequences for the children that had been separated from their families and heritage. Samuel's play examines the themes of separation, survival and denial of one's past through the character Eva, who at the age of nine is sent to England on one of the transports. The first part of this thesis concerns the historical events leading to the disenfranchisement of the European Jews, as well as the people and politics that were a part of the Kindertransport rescue network. The second aspect of this paper addresses the staging of Samuels' play, my character study, and the role preparation that I carried out to play a Jewish German girl from the age of 9 through 17.

Introduction:

During the ten-month period between December 1, 1938 and September 1, 1939, prior to the outbreak of World War II, a program was created through the joint undertaking of British political and religious entities that resulted in the rescue of 10,000 mostly Jewish children from Nazi persecution. The German railway dubbed the effort Kindertransport (children's transport) whereby children under the age of 17 were put on trains bound for safe havens in England by their desperate Jewish parents.

I was introduced to the *Kindertransport* play in the spring of 2012, when Professor Betty Bernhard suggested that I attend a reading of Diane Samuels' award winning 1993 play, *Kindertransport*, at Scripps College. I was immediately intrigued by the opportunity to make this play the subject of my Senior Acting Project and Senior Thesis. During the summer months I began researching the period and studying the themes and characters that were the inspiration for Samuels' play. At the beginning of the fall semester, I was cast to play Eva, a little Kinder girl who at the age of nine is put on one of the transports by her German Jewish family and sent to England. As she grows up, Eva accepts a new identity as a barrier to shield her from painful memories. Finally as an adult she is forced to confront her past realities of separation, abandonment, anger, and guilt.

The first aspect of this Senior Thesis encompasses an in-depth research study of the historical events leading up to the disenfranchisement of the European Jews by the Third Reich and the Kindertransport rescue effort. Throughout the text, I have incorporated actual Kinders' statements that reflect their personal impressions

of the historical events; their comments are in italics. Their words and impressions bring an eyewitness testimony to the historical record. These stories were the inspiration for Samuels' drama and provided me with key insights on what it meant to be a Kinder.

The second area of study concerns the staging of Samuels' play and the character study that I undertook to play the role of Eva in the Pomona College Theatre, October 2012 production of *Kindertransport*. The character required that I play a German Jewish girl from the age of 9 to 17, and to speak German, English with a German accent, and then English. This meant that I had to acquire the physicality of a child as well as the accents and appropriate diction and voice quality that matched the character's development from childhood through adolescence and adulthood.

Eva's story begins when she is separated from her family and sent on a journey to find safety in England where she is taken in by Lil Miller, a kind English woman. Prior to the outbreak of WWII Eva tries valiantly to hold on to her heritage, and the hope that she will be reunited with her family. Her optimism is crushed after the war begins and she learns that her parents, unable to escape from Germany, will not be able to come for her. During the war years she spends her adolescence creating a new identity that separates her from the past. As a young adult she changes her name to Evelyn and becomes thoroughly anglicized. Eva is faced with an overwhelming dilemma after the war ends when her real mother, Helga, suddenly reappears in England. Should she continue her newfound English identity or return to her former German self? Past and present intertwine

throughout the play as scenes from Eva's childhood haunt the adult Evelyn in the present. Finally, her own daughter, Faith, forces her to confront her past realities of separation, abandonment, resentment, and guilt.

This thesis study made me aware of the importance of preserving the knowledge of the Holocaust and to realize that humans possess the capacity for extreme cruelty as well as for great humanity. I was inspired and humbled by the individuals that I met and interviewed as a part of my research. As the survivors and Kinder continue to age we will have lost the ability to hear the first-hand accounts of the Holocaust. I was honored to take part in a project that introduced their voices to a new generation. The *Kindertransport* production was a tremendous example of how the theater plays an essential role to inform, enlighten and actively connect with the audience. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity that this Senior Thesis allowed me to grow as a student, an actor and as a person.

I am deeply indebted to the professors and the staff of the Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance for their help and support. I especially would like to thank Sherry Linnell, Tom Leabhart, Margaret Kemp, Alma Martinez, and most especially Betty Bernhard for the advice, knowledge and encouragement that they so generously shared with me throughout this experience.

Part One

I. The Sociological and Political Events leading up to the Kindertransport:

From the time of the Romans, AD 321, the Jews had lived together in Germany and had established a long tradition of contributing to Germanic society. Throughout the centuries they had experienced varying levels of hostility but by the middle of the nineteenth century, the Jews had gained a sense of security and acceptance.

At the dawn of the twentieth century Germany was riding a wave of prosperity and growing status. In 1914, the First World War presented the Jews with the opportunity to prove their loyalty to the Fatherland by honorably serving in the German armed forces: "Nearly 18 percent of the entire German-Jewish population had served in the military. Of these 35,000 were decorated and 12,000 lost their lives" (Fast 2). A Kinder, Ann Fox, whose father had been shot through the elbow and lost the use of his hand in the First World War while serving in France, wrote the following reflection in the memoir of her childhood in Nazi Germany and life in England, *My Heart In A Suitcase:*

> *My father wore a wooden prosthesis...the hand that he lost wore the iron ring with the inscription 'The Fatherland's thanks.'"* (Fox 36)[1]

The First World War changed Germany forever and set in motion a series of events that proved to be disastrous for the Jews, but this would not become apparent for many years to come.

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[1] The Kinders' words and comments are indented and italicized throughout the text.

Following World War I, Jews experienced an unprecedented assimilation into German society. Historian John Dippel described this integration as a process that caused the Jews to: "Subordinate their Jewishness to their Germaness" (Fast 1). Many Jews considered themselves to be Germans first - believing that religion was no longer an issue that should separate them from what they now believed to be their country of origin:

> *My father attended the Synagogue on the High Holy days at the Reform Temple. Our family was assimilated and did not adhere to most of the Jewish laws. We did not keep the Sabbath, nor did we keep a kosher house.* (Fox 14)

A large segment of the Jewish community had become less religiously observant as they had become more integrated into German society.

Intermarriage with non-Jews contributed to a departure from Jewish identity: "By 1930 an estimated one-in-four German Jews were marrying outside the community" (Fast 1). Often the children of these intermarriages were raised apart from the Jewish faith as a means to thoroughly adapt to German culture and social norms. An end result was that many children of Jewish heritage knew very little about the Jewish religion. This assimilation was a cause for concern among Jewish leaders who feared that their community might be thoroughly absorbed into German society by the end of the twentieth century. Anti-Semitism did exist in Germany, but owing to the fact that anti-Jewish political parties had failed to gain power or recognition it was not a primary concern. At best, Jews felt that they were valued by German society, and at worst, that they were tolerated.

The Jews had achieved prosperous careers in business, banking, medicine, law, and in the arts: "Three-quarters of all Jews engaged in trade, commerce, the

financial sectors and the professions" (Fast 2). German Jews were well educated in academics and the arts, and generally lived a comfortable middle-class life style:

> *My father secured a prominent position with an international bank in Berlin, and our family was comfortably provided for. We employed a maid and we were able to afford family vacations at the seaside.* (Fox 2)

This economic prominence had little relation to their population's size: "In the 1930's, the German-Jews represented less than one-percent or approximately 525,000 people" (Harris 1). Because of their chosen professions, most Jews lived in large cities; this was in contrast to the fact that the majority of Germans lived in rural towns and villages. The relative concentration of the Jewish population made it appear that their total numbers were larger than the reality. The assimilation and economic prominence of this relatively tiny ethnic group led to the rise of anti-Semitism, especially among Germans that might not have been doing as well after the First World War.

The economic sanctions imposed on Germany in 1919 at the signing of the Treaty of Versailles were meant to punish Germany for causing the war. Loss of lands, factories, and reductions to the military along with repayment of war costs crippled Germany financially and forced the country into a deep recession. The German people were angry with the government for agreeing to accept the treaty (although they had little choice) and this resentment led to the rise of The National Socialist Party:

> Thus emerged for Hitler, as for so many Germans, a fanatical belief in the legend of the "stab in the back" which, more than anything else was to undermine the Weimar Republic and pave the way for Hitler's ultimate triumph. (Shirer 31)

The German people believed that they had sacrificed much during WWI, and resented their government signing the armistice; unable to accept the humiliating fact that Germany had lost the war, they looked for a scapegoat. The Social Democratic party was seen as the perpetrator of Germany's decline and therefore became the target of the public's scorn:

> A clutch of parties on the far right were apposed (sic) to the Weimar Republic, hated democracy and socialism, resented the Versailles peace settlement, regarded modern culture as degenerate, and believed that the Jews were behind all these ills. (Harris 4)

Adolf Hitler saw this period of economic and political turmoil as an opportunity to propagate his radical political views and anti-Semitic doctrines by building support among a wide range of discontented groups.

The Nazi party achieved dominance in January of 1933, when Hitler was made Chancellor. Shortly after assuming power, he began a campaign of propaganda and intimidation, and used his charismatic public speaking skills to promote his ideology of racial purity:

> Articles began to appear in German newspapers that reflected right-wing sentiments at the time: 'A Jew who is born in Germany, is still no German; he is still a Jew.' Ironically, from being hated for being different, the Jews were now accused of being too German, too successful at the expense of ethnic Germans. (Fast 3)

The erroneous attitude that Jews were "everywhere" was exaggerated by the fact that they worked in highly visible jobs in the retail and service industries and that they interfaced personally with their clientele. Many Germans harbored resentments toward the Jews because of the perception that they were the controlling force in commerce, banking and the legal professions.

This deep-seated view that the Jewish economic success came at the expense of ethnic Germans provided the means for radical politicians to vilify a group that could singularly be identified by their ethnicity. Anti-communism, religious anti-Semitism, and conspiracy theories that the Jews were plotting for world dominance also contributed to the suspicion of Jews that was deeply embedded in German culture:

> Many conservative Germans had their fear of a link between Jews and communism confirmed when a few German communist leaders and anarchists were identified as Jews, despite these men never adhering to Jewish community nor receiving appreciable support from it. (Fast 4)

The prominence of Jews in the arts and sciences, contributed to the impression that they were "modern thinkers." As a group, however, they were overwhelmingly conservative, middle-class citizens.

Hitler capitalized on German fear of Jewish domination and perpetuated the belief that once Jews achieved superiority, they would cause world destruction: In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler wrote, 'Today I believe that I am writing in accordance with the will of the Almighty Creator; by defending myself against the Jews, I am fighting for the work of the Lord" (Shrier 81). The right-wing German belief that the Jews were conspirators against Christianity and plotting world domination led to the adoption of the anti-Jewish legislation of the 1930's:

> Anti-Semitic decrees began in the spring of 1933 with the proclamation of a one-day boycott of all Jewish shops, the forcible retirement of all non-Aryan civil servants except for war veterans and their families, and the prohibitions of all-kosher butchering. (Fast 5)

The scope of the anti-Jewish legislation escalated with the passing of the Nuremberg Laws in September of 1935. Among other restrictions placed on the Jews, the

decrees made it a crime for sexual relations and intermarriage with non-Jewish Germans, voided their German citizenship, and forced Jewish workers to leave their civil service and management positions:

> *My father's income had diminished since 1933 when he was forced to resign his job at the International bank. By Nazi decree, no Jews were allowed to work in that capacity. It took him a few months to find employment as a clerk in the offices of a Jewish organization – quite a comedown for a proud man.* (Fox 18)

The rise of German militarism as well as the Nazi persecution of Jews prompted President Franklin D. Roosevelt to call for an international conference to discuss the issue of Jewish immigration. In July of 1938, thirty-two countries attended the Evian Conference in France to discuss Jewish emigration from Europe:

> Governments at the time discussed emigration schemes ranging from South America to Africa and beyond, and a few Jews found refuge, but there were no open doors to receive the hundreds of thousands. (Fast 9)

Many Jews wanted to immigrate to Palestine and the United States, but quota systems limited their opportunities. The U.S. required financial guarantees as well: "An affidavit from a U.S. citizen guaranteeing that the immigrant would not become a burden to the welfare system served to limit access" (Benz 1). The Evian Conference made it clear that the nations of the world resisted immigration and at the same time were unwilling to interfere with Hitler's military aggression and Nazi disfranchisements of the Jews. Most Americans believed that the atrocities were happening in a far-off place that was more than three thousand miles away and they felt no urgency to interfere. The failure of the Evian Conference gave Hitler free rein to set in motion a plan to force the Jews out of Germany by enacting the anti-Jewish legislation that had been a cornerstone of his rise to power.

By 1938, Jews were eliminated from the professions of law and medicine and virtually all forms of business; they were forbidden to go to public places including libraries, parks, cinemas, and swimming pools. Many German shops refused to sell food and medicine to Jews, and signs reading "Jews Not Admitted" appeared throughout cities and villages.

The laws were equally injurious to adults and to children. Adults lost their livelihood and children were expelled from public schools and universities: "The effect of all this negativity was that Jewish children became increasingly isolated" (Fast 6). Jewish children were not allowed to play with Gentile friends and because it was illegal for a German to teach a Jewish student, they were allowed to attend only Jewish schools:

> *Dorit and I were no longer able to socialize. She had to wear the uniform of the Nazi-sponsored 'BDM' (Union of German Girls), I was told to pretend not to know her whenever she was in the company of the Aryan girls.* (Fox 31)

By the end of the first-four years of Nazi rule, the Jews had been stripped of their rights and forced to live as second-class citizens. As the Nazis became more secure in their power, random violence and Jewish persecution took on a more and more vicious nature.

Forcing the Jews out of the economy increased the urgency to emigrate but there were political and financial impediments to leaving. The German government both encouraged and hindered emigration. Before being allowed to apply for a visa, Jews had to receive clearance certificates stating that they had paid an emigration tax that amounted to an atonement payment to the German government. As a result of the pogroms of November 1938, most Jews had already been forced to relinquish

all of their capital and earning potential, and were thus unable to pay the required fees. Many Jews decided there was no future for them in Germany and those that could get out made plans to leave the country. Jewish emigration increased substantially: "Approximately 30,000 Jews exited the Third Reich after the anti-Jewish legislation was enacted" (Fast 7). The Jews who emigrated from Germany relinquished virtually everything they owned and would have to start over with basically nothing in their new country of refuge.

Essentially, the majority of the German Jews were reluctant to leave their established roots and ties to Germany. People optimistically held on to the hope that the German people would eventually stand up to the Nazis and reject their demagoguery:

> Many of the Jewish middle-class, as well as governments of most Western nations, viewed this current rash of extreme anti-Semitism with indifference or as a temporary aberration and felt that life would soon revert to normal patterns. (Fast 7)

In reality, even if the masses of German society as well as foreign governments objected to Jewish persecution, they proved to be a mostly silent majority and collectively made few attempts to stop it.

The prevailing attitude that Hitler's regime would not last and that life would return to normal, stemmed from the common notion that an economically advanced and culturally sophisticated society would never stoop to the level of barbarianism that Hitler advocated. Rational minds questioned how a people devoted to music and art, and with a long history of Christianity would be willing to accept the Nazi propaganda of hate. The historian Richard J. Evans offered the

explanation that culture has rarely impeded politicians and societies that are bent on going to war:

> If the experience of the Third Reich teaches us anything, it is that a love of great music, great art and great literature does not provide people with any kind of moral or political immunization against violence, atrocity, or subservience to dictatorship. (Evans xxiii)

The industrialized world's unwillingness to recognize the threat that Hitler's totalitarianism posed ultimately proved to be the greatest mistake of the twentieth century.

The Anschluss (the invasion of Austria by Germany) in 1938 brought another 185,000 Austrian Jews under Nazi control. Anti-Semitism was even more pervasive in Austria than in Germany. In the days following the annexation Jews were harassed and assaulted in the streets. Edith Milton wrote of the humiliation she was made to feel because she was a Jew in her book, *The Tiger in the Attic, Memories of the Kindertransport and Growing Up English:*

> *I understand, for instance, when my best friend Ursula no longer comes to my house, that shame must be the element that most properly belongs to me. When I go to visit her, her mother will not open the gate, and when on my way home three children call out names at me, which I completely fail to comprehend, I nevertheless know them to be shameful. When walking home from school, I was confronted by Nazis and upon seeing their brown uniforms emblazoned with swastikas and hostile images I soiled myself. I am overwhelmed with shame: my twin shames, actually—of being Jewish and being incontinent, but even when they are gone, I am so overwhelmed by humiliation that for several minutes, I can't move.* (Milton 4)

The Nuremburg Laws enforced in Germany were immediately enacted in Austria. With their businesses shut down, their property seized and their rights brutally obliterated, many Jews became desperate to seek asylum from the Nazi oppression. The situation became a conundrum with the Nazi's pushing for the Jews to leave

while at the same time other countries became more and more resistant to Jewish refugees: "In the autumn of 1938, partly in response to the request of Switzerland that feared an influx of impoverished Jewish immigrants – the passports held by Jews were marked with a 'J' stamp"(Harris 8). This made it easier for the Nazis and the immigration officials in other countries to identify Jews and to single them out as being aliens and racially separate:

> *In August 1938 the Nazi's had decreed that all Jews had to add the name 'Sara' or "Israel' to their given names, and they were issued a Kennkarte (identity card) with their photo, new name, and stamped with a big 'J'. My parents tried to shield me from their worries. (Fox 19)*

The Jews recognized the storm clouds that were engulfing them but their options for escape were very limited.

Requests for emigration continued to serge after the Munich Agreement of 1938; whereby German acquisition of the "Sudetenland" and parts of Czechoslovakia brought another sizable portion of Jewish population under Nazi control: "While the German government at this point willingly issued exit visas, albeit with crippling financial prohibitions, almost all of the world's doors were closed to Jews" (Fast 9). Shanghai offered asylum to Jews, but conditions in China for an immigrating foreigner were filled with challenges and uncertainties. Perhaps the statement that appeared in the *Manchester Guardian* in May of 1936, best described the problems for Jews wishing to leave the Nazi occupied lands: "The world seemed to be divided into two parts – those places where the Jews could not live, and those where they could not enter" (Fast 9). The worldwide closed doors attitude toward Jewish immigration was due to many factors. The industrialized world was still suffering from high unemployment resulting from the global

recession; attitudes of anti-Semitism, and political isolationism strongly influenced the resistance to Jewish immigration.

The flash point for Jewish misery and the irrefutable signal that Jews were in great danger under the Nazis came on November 7, 1938, when a young, distraught Polish Jew – whose parents had been expelled from Poland - assassinated a German embassy worker. The shooting gave Hitler's propaganda machine the perfect opportunity to launch a massive pogrom against the Jews throughout Nazi occupied territories that become known as Kristallnacht, or *crystal night* because the streets were littered with broken fragments of smashed glass from the windows of Jewish businesses and synagogues:

> On November 9 and 10, 1938, rampaging mobs throughout Germany and the newly acquired territories of Austria and the Sudetenland freely attacked Jews in the street, in their homes, and in their places of worship. At least 96 Jews were killed (some estimate nearer to 300) and hundreds more were injured, more than 1,300 synagogues were burned, and almost 7,500 Jewish businesses were destroyed, and countless cemeteries and schools were vandalized...A total of 30,000 Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps. (Fast 10)

With Kristallnacht, the German hostility toward Jews erupted to a level of violence and brutality that marked a "point of no return" in the minds of the Jewish community: "Murder and arson and pillage were not the only tribulations suffered by innocent German Jews...the Jews had to pay for the destruction of their own property" (Shirer 431). The Jews were expected to pay for the 25 million marks in damage to their property, in addition to a billion marks fine as punishment for their "abominable crimes," and they were also ordered to clean up the massive debris left on the streets. Lisa Jura, a musical protégé that at fourteen-years of age was sent to England as a Kinder, described what she saw on the day after Kristallnacht:

> *I watched in horror, as my father was forced to strip naked, get down on his knees, and scrub the dirty pavement. The storm troopers yelled, 'Schwein, Juden Schwein' and kicked him when he didn't move fast enough.* (Golabek 18)

Perhaps the most alarming aspect of all the violence and vandalism was the realization that the German government had organized and implemented the pogrom. The situation for Jews at the mercy of the Nazi's had reached the edge of the abyss. They had been eliminated from German society, robbed of all their possessions and were now being driven to the ghettos. At the time no one could imagine the depths of their hapless future, but the Third Reich had now revealed to the world its intentions to follow a course of brutality and persecution that was designed to destroy the Jewish population.

The worldwide passive reaction to Hitler's radical policies toward the Jews had now reached a turning point. There was an immediate response of condemnation and outrage. President Roosevelt recalled the American ambassador from Berlin and ordered the Embassy to destroy all politically sensitive files. The British Ambassador at Berlin called the organized attacks: "An orgy of violence which even the Middle Ages could scarcely equal" (Fast 11). People throughout the world were shocked at the newspaper photos, newsreels and radio accounts of the violence that the German's had perpetrated against innocent civilians.

Hitler's reaction to international criticism was that it gave support for his claims regarding the Jewish world conspiracy. What had been clear to the Jews was now being revealed to the world -- Hitler would show no restraint in his megalomaniacal desire for world domination.

A few South American and Central American countries along with the US and Canada allowed children to join parents already living in their countries. Australia provided entry for a small number of Jews to immigrate. These minimal efforts fell far short in answering the desperate need for the thousands of Jews trying to flee from Nazi oppressions. Only Great Britain would step forward with a plan of action to aid the children of endangered European Jews.

II. The People and Politics That Were part of the Kindertransport Rescue Network:

The worldwide Jewish community recognized the signs of the coming catastrophe for the European Jews and began early on to organize financial efforts to assist Jewish refugees. Quakers, Christians and other humanitarian groups joined the English Jews to begin mobilizing a coordinated effort to bring young refugees to England.

The settlement of Jews in England was a relatively modern-day movement that took root after the turn of the twentieth century: "By 1933 most of the approximately 300,000-member community had an eastern-European background" (Fast 17). Religiously, they were largely Orthodox, but financially they ranged from wealthy and titled to working class and even impoverished. Despite this relatively new influx, Great Britain felt a keen responsibility toward the Jews.

The British government had several reasons for granting asylum to an unlimited number of Jewish children:

> Firstly the UK felt a particular responsibility for the refugees from Europe in that Palestine was governed as a British protectorate, but in order not to endanger its diplomatic relations with Arab states the United Kingdom had decreed strict immigration restrictions. Furthermore the government, seeing itself as a world power, hoped this action would represent a role model that would encourage other countries to follow suit. Not least, the government was aware of its responsibilities to its own Jewish community and did not wish to evade them. (Gopfert 1)

The policy toward adult refugees was not so generous; under no circumstances was the government ready to open wide its doors to adult refugees. The prevailing attitude in Great Britain regarding general refugee immigration was politically volatile: "Labor unions and professional organizations just recovering from the

Great Depression feared than an influx of refugees might jeopardize British jobs" (Fast 18). Whereas the idea of bringing children into the country was generally acceptable to the British population: "Children aroused sympathy and posed little danger, at least in the short term, to the labor market. Moreover, the children's stay in the country was planned to be temporary" (Gopfert 1). A segment of the British population also identified with a long tradition of sending young children off to boarding schools; the idea of temporarily separating children from their parents at a young age was seen as a normal thing to many British.

In response to the events of Kristallnacht, a delegation of eminent British Jews asked for an audience with the Prime Minister to propose a plan for the acceptance of children refugees from Europe. The contingent included: Viscount Samuel, Lord Bearsted, the Chief Rabbi Dr. J. H. Hertz, and the Zionist leader, Dr. Chaim Weizman. The group petitioned the British government to allow the temporary admission of young children and teenagers to England with the promise that the children would not present a financial burden for the country. The British cabinet discussed the question the next day:

> The Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, said that the country could not admit more refugees without provoking a backlash. The Foreign Secretary, Lord Halifax, thought that an act of generosity might have a 'knock-on' effect and cause the United States to open its doors wider. (Harris 10)

After vigorous debate, the cabinet agreed to support the minors'-only refugees immigration plan.

Across the Atlantic, a bill was presented to the U.S. Congress that proposed a relaxation of immigration quotas, but under pressure from the powerful anti-immigration lobby, the bill died in committee. The anti-immigration forces said that

the entry of unaccompanied children would be, "The thin edge of a wedge" (Ushmm 2). The group feared that the influx of children would serve to open the way for their parents and other adults to eventually join them. America was not ready to follow Britain's example and assist the plight of the European Jews.

While the rest of the world largely declined to act, the British Cabinet committee agreement to accept an unlimited number of unaccompanied children under the age of seventeen set in motion an unprecedented rescue effort. Although no one knew the magnitude of this agreement at the time, this singular act of generosity and humanity would have the profound effect of saving nearly 10,000 children from extermination in the Nazi death camps.

In the beginning days of the Kindertransport project, influential men in the political and financial world lent their support to the project. They were to form the contingent that presented the proposal to the British Prime Minister:

> The wealthy stockbroker Otto Schiff, Professor Bentwich, the publisher Dennis Cohen, Sir William Wyndham Deedes of the National Council of Social Service, Viscount Samuel, the banker Lionel de Rothschild, Members of Parliament Philip Noel-Baker and Major Victor Cazalet, the Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare, the former Prime Minister Lord Baldwin, and Sir Charles Stead, first executive director of the Refugee Children's movement, (hereafter RCM), all helped "bring to the organization the stamp of institutional legitimacy at the outset. (Oldfield 1)

These gentlemen and many others including private citizens and representatives from the Jewish and Christian clergy were essential to the overall support of the Kindertransport's beginning design and concept.

Members of the British Jewish community came together as early as April 1933 to form: "The Jewish Refugees Committee (JRC). This body was to become the largest of all case-working organization in the refugee movement" (Fast 12). The

Central British Fund for German Jewry (CBF) was created at the same time to organize the Jewish community for fund raising and relief efforts. Other Jewish organizations were created on a grass-roots level and were eventually brought together under the banner of the Refugee Children's Movement (RCM).

The Jewish Refugee Committee was charged with the task of formulating a plan to relocate Jewish children that was presented to Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain on November 15, 1938. After meeting with eminent Jewish representatives, he agreed to give the proposal his, "benevolent interest" (Fast 18). The politician Eleanor Rathbone was an outspoken Member of Parliament who eloquently pleaded for both financial support and more generous asylum policies. It was said that Rathbone's influence and support was incalculable to the success of the Kindertransport effort.

After much discussion and debate in the House of Commons, the British government agreed to the proposed plan:

> Whereby an unspecified number of unaccompanied children from the Greater Reich, under the age of 18, would immediately be granted admission to Britain 'for educational purposes' and for a period of two years provided they would not become a liability to the British taxpayer. (Fast 19)

Because the children were to be brought out mostly by train, the German rail authorities' gave the operation the name: *Kindertransport* (children transport), a term which the British also readily adopted.

The speed at which these organizations came together to make the Kindertransport a reality remains as one of the most efficient and effective volunteer efforts in modern history.

It should be said that the heart and soul of the Kindertransport – the areas that involved the actual care and oversight of the children and the myriad of details and coordination therein - fell mostly to women:

> The organizing secretaries of at least eight out of the twelve Regional Committees of the RCM were women; in London all those in charge of the eight departments of Quaker refugee relief were women: and in most of the thousands of private foster homes the de facto 'head of household' in wartime was a woman. (Oldfield 1)

Just as the Second World War marked the beginning of the changing role for women in the work place, women played an essential role in the operations and management of the Kindertransport's administration throughout the ten-year period of its existence.

Elaine Blond, daughter of the founder of Marks and Spencer department stores in Britain, was perhaps one of the best-known members of the RCM operational staff. She served as RCM Treasurer and was a outspoken supporter for individual home placement for Kinder rather than Jewish run hostels that she found to be, "culturally monolithic and Spartan in nature" (Oldfield 5). She was constantly at odds with Rabbi Schonfeld and other Orthodox Jewish leaders who adamantly opposed Jewish children being placed in Gentile homes. Blond fought against the Orthodox community's demands because of her profound belief that children were better served in a home environment. Moreover, placing the children in Jewish homes proved impossible because there were simply not enough available to meet the need.

The size and scope of the organizational support that was needed to operate the Kindertransport was remarkable and touched almost every city, town and

village in England: "The Children's' Movement estimated there were altogether 175 local committees throughout Britain to aid the effort" (Fast 13). The RCM became the singular organization to sponsor most of the 10,000 children from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia that would comprise the Kindertransport. The organization was made up of Jewish and Christian workers:

> In 1933 British Quakers organized the German Emergency committee, later named the Friends Committee for Refugees to assist all who were fleeing Nazi persecution, whether Christian, or Jew. (Fast 14)

The Quakers were among the first non-Jewish groups to step forward offering housing and financial aid to Jewish refugees.

Bertha Bracey, a British Quaker, had a long history of helping German victims of World War I. This made her a natural choice as the Secretary of the Friends' German Emergency Committee, the organization founded in 1933 to help assist victims of Nazism escape from Europe. As Secretary to the Friends Committee on Refugees and Aliens, she became head of a staff of 80 voluntary caseworkers, mostly women, handling 14,000 case records from Germany, Austria, Poland, and Czechoslovakia. Bracey's office at Bloomsbury House became a center for much of the Kindertransport administrative operations throughout the years of its existence.

In 1938, the Christian Council for Refugees from Germany and Central Europe, joined forces to coordinate the refugee work of Anglicans, Roman Catholics, Quakers and Free Churches: "The council worked closely with the Refugee Children's Movement, especially in its dealings with the British and German governments" (Fast 15). All of the major relief organizations were moved under one roof at Bloomsbury House in January 1939, to form the body responsible for the

nearly 10,000 children or Kinder as they came to be known, who would arrive in England during a ten month period from December 1938 thru September 1939, that would be known as the Kindertransport.

The categories of Kinder were divided into two groups: sponsored children whose fifty-pound (approximately $1500 in today's money) immigration fee was guaranteed by relatives or family friends, or non-sponsored children that had been identified as being in immediate danger but unable to provide the sponsorship fee. The unsponsored children's maintenance and care was to be paid by the sponsoring committee or the local committees. Many British families stepped up as sponsors after reading advertisements placed by desperate Jewish parents in British newspapers. An appeal on the BBC by Viscount Samuel brought in an offer of 500 homes the day after the broadcast. Children with physical handicaps were accepted only if sponsored: "The Movement for the Care of children from Germany managed to find places in British facilities for deaf and blind children who were placed in institutions throughout Britain" (Fast 22). Upon arrival in Britain, non-guaranteed children were taken to Kinder relocation camps until sponsors could be found:

> There was a tremendous difference between the guaranteed and unguaranteed child since the youngster would go into a home where he was expected and could anticipate acceptance and care, whereas the unguaranteed child was placed into a camp until a sponsor could be found. (Fast 21)

The decision to allow an unguaranteed child to join the Kindertransport was left in the hands of the European Committees working in cooperation with the Quakers. Priority was given to children whose fathers were in concentration camps and to families that could no longer support them:

> *I was in the orphanage for two days and I went to the organizations that looked after Jewish interests in Hamburg. A wonderful woman I knew there said, 'Abrascha, what are you doing here? Where's your mother?" I said my mother had been deported and she said, "You know, there's something happening now, I think you should get on it." It was the Kindertransport. She said, "You better register immediately, what are you going to do?" So I said, OK, I'll go to England – and just like matter of fact, as if it were nothing.* (Harris 83)

During Kristallnacht thousands of Jewish men were sent to concentration camps - hundreds of them were killed and never returned to their families. Homeless boys and girls that heard about the Kindertransports were usually accepted immediately.

> *In hindsight, I think my sister Hella and I owe our survival to my father's death because they selected children who had problems, who'd lost parents, or whose parents could no longer look after them, to go on the Kindertransport. (Harris 92)*

The Kindertransport offered a ray of hope for children that had no place to turn after losing their parents to the Nazi persecution.

Parents that wanted a place for their child had to send an application with a health certificate, photo and agree to entrust their care to the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany. The application also required the applicant to declare religious affiliation: "Parents were required to sign a document agreeing to have their child placed in any available home, even with a non-Jewish family if no Jewish accommodation was obtainable" (Fast 24). Once the application was approved, it was sent to London for final documentation:

> The documents read, 'This document of identity is issued with the approval of His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom to young persons to be admitted to the United Kingdom for educational purposes under the care of the Inter-Aid Committee for children – This document requires no visa. (Fast 25)

The permits were returned to Germany where they had to be received by the German police -- who then forwarded the documents to the refugee organizations.

It was not unusual for the SS police to hold up the paper trail as a way to exhibit their ultimate control over the process.

The Jewish community heard of the transports through word of mouth and though Jewish newspapers and organizations: "Some Jewish communities recruited boys from local youth organizations to call on people with children in their homes to inform them of the opportunity" (Fast 25). The Quakers formed mobile units to help families complete their applications and to interview candidates. With a profound sense of urgency, the workers toiled round-the-clock to process the documentation that typically took from two-to-fourteen days.

Jewish parents were frantic to get their children out and besieged the refugee organizations. They anxiously waited in long lines to see relief workers who were faced with an emotionally heart wrenching task. Because orphans were given priorities: "some desperate parents abandoned their young children at the doors of orphanages to give them an added chance" (Fast 25). Parents from all backgrounds and situations made it their first priority to get the children to safety. A Kinder, Karen Gershon in her collective biography, *We Came As Children*, recorded the following testament of a German Kinder:

> *During the time my father was in the concentration camp my mother, trying everything to have him released, was advised by the Jewish committee to send my sister and me to England with the first children's transport leaving Berlin. This terrible decision fell on her shoulders alone—but what else could she do, at least it would mean safety for her children...she sent us not knowing what would become of us or if she would ever see us again. My sister was eleven and I was twelve years old.* (Gershon 25)

The older children understood the dire situation they were living under, which somewhat eased their apprehensions about leaving the country:

> Psychologically, many of the older children were ready to go. They had witnessed the humiliation of their parents, the imprisonment of fathers and older brothers, or had even been in camps and were then let out with the understanding that they would leave Germany between two-weeks and two-months. (Fast 26)

These children had experienced persecutions at school and in their neighborhoods; many were impoverished and realized the necessity to leave. The younger children had also experienced anxiety but they were more likely to want to remain with their parents. Mark Jonathan Harris and Deborah Openheimer's book, *Into the Arms of Strangers – Stories of the Kindertransport,* offered the following Kinder's description of the parting from her parents at the station:

> *A few days or so, before I was to leave, I accused my parents of trying to get rid of me. I said, 'I'm really a gypsy child, and you're now trying to get rid of me. You adopted me, and now you no longer want me.' Though I was glad to get out of Germany, at the same time I also felt a great deal of fear that I wasn't totally capable of talking about or dealing with, so I lashed out at them. I must have really deeply, deeply hurt my parents.* (Harris 91)

Explaining to their children why they were being sent away was a terrible dilemma for parents. Not wanting to frighten the child, parents tried to underplay the sadness that they were acutely feeling: "Now these over-burdened parents had to prepare their children for separation" (Fast 26). Most parents did this by telling their children, as young as seven or eight, they were going on a holiday or that they were traveling to England to enjoy "a great adventure." Some parents waited until they arrived at the train station to explain that they were not going on the trip but would follow shortly: "Children who believed that their parents would soon be joining them could not understand why there was so much weeping as the train pulled out" (Fast 27). The parents were forced to put on a brave face so as not to

upset their children before they departed for England, but they were not always able to disguise their heartbreak.

> *When my parents put me on the train in Frankfurt, they were still smiling. On some level I think I understood they weren't really smiling, but I wanted to believe that. As the train started to pull out of the station, my parents ran along side of the train on the platform, and I remember I heard the refrain, 'You're leaving. You're leaving.' I watched their faces, and tears were streaming down their cheeks. And I knew then: these people really love me. This is why they're sending me away. Many years later I realized that by sending me away, my parents gave me the gift of life a second time.* (Harris 111)

The Nazi's tried to limit the emotional goodbyes on the train platforms by forcing the families to take their leave in private rooms at the stations. There were instances where families would follow the trains in their automobiles to catch last glimpses of the children as they passed through the stations in route to the German border.

The idea that a parent would have to face such an impossible separation from their children seems unimaginable:

> For the parents themselves, the decision to send their children away to a foreign country to be brought up with strangers and then to see them actually board the train not knowing if they would ever see them again, was an act of incomprehensible desperation and selfless courage. (Fast 27)

Likewise the traumatic separation from their parents was to remain a haunting memory for many Kinder well into their adult lives:

> *My transport was the first to leave from Vienna. It left on 10 December 1938. I remember that last evening. All the cousins and aunts came to say goodbye. There was one aunt, the mother of twins, who was angry with my parents for getting me on this transport she had not managed to get her twins aboard. There was panic and fury in that room. (Harris 82)*

Even the youngest of the Kinder were sent off with instructions to find sponsors for their siblings, cousins, and even for their parents. This proved to be a terrible emotional and practical burden for the children once they arrived in England.

Desperate parents wrote to their children imploring them to find sponsors for other family members:

> *When I arrived in England, I knew how desperate people were in Germany. And although my English was not very good, I set myself a task to try to find sponsors for them... My biggest problem was to try and get my parents out. So I proceeded to find large houses and knock at the door to find out whether I could get them a job – my mother as cook, my father as gardener – anything to get them out. Sometimes I knocked at the door and I burst into tears. Sometimes I knocked at the door and with my very poor English tried to explain what is was all about, who I was, what I wanted, what I needed, Help!* (Hammel 4)

In letters from home, the anxious parents would chastise their children for not doing enough and accuse them of neglecting their responsibilities. This would fill them with terrible feelings of guilt that many Kinder continued to carry long after becoming adults themselves.

The act of packing was significant because of the hard choices to be made; practical necessities had to compete for space with treasured mementos of family and childhood. In the case of the Kindertransport these items may have been keepsakes or clothing that represented a concrete connection with one's family and past:

> Objects make a child's experience concrete; they become links to parents and later support remembrance; with greater distance, such items serve to function of bracketing an experience. (Korte 1)

Parents tried to send their children with whatever clothes and provisions that they could afford and that might be packed into a single suitcase.

> *Mother prepared the clothing I was to take. Everything was made for future growth in mind as the clothes had to last for a while. Mutti also prepared me for my impending womanhood by packing sanitary napkins and explaining their use when the need came.* (Fox 41)

The Kinder were forbidden to take money or valuables out of Germany. Most parents tried to defy this order by concealing gold and heirlooms in their children's clothes. The children then faced the terror that the SS guards would confiscate the things and threaten to send the child back. Out of fear of being discovered, sometimes the children threw their parent's valuables and their only keepsakes out the train windows. For many Kinder the actual suitcase became their memento of a lost time and place and the people that were associated with it.

Each Kinder wore a cardboard sign with a number around his or her neck for identification. The Kinder Ralph Samuels stated, "*I felt more like a package arriving in England than a person*" (see APPEND). European relief workers accompanied the children on the trains: "These individuals, ranging from former youth leaders to unemployed Jewish professionals, to Quaker relief workers, generally remained with the youngsters until they reached the British port" (Fast 31). The chaperones then had to return to Europe. Although the Jewish workers may have been tempted to seek asylum, they acknowledged that their actions would jeopardize the Kinder that remained in Europe and in the course of hundreds of trips: "only one person defected" (Fast 31). Many of the chaperones were later sent to concentration camps after the war began and the Kindertransport ended.

If adults were not available, older girls were asked to take responsibility for their siblings or for the younger children: "The arrangement of using older children worked only insofar as the older children were responsible enough to provide the care that was needed. It was, after all, children looking after children" (Fast 31).

> *My brother who was only two was allowed to come to England with me. When we were going from the train to the boat he was far ahead of me leading the long line*

> *of children. He looked like a drummer, with his chamber pot strapped on to his back. I was ten years old and had promised my mother to look after him. But as soon as we had said goodbye to our parents, we were separated and we have never lived together again at all.* (Gershon 28)

The situation on the train cars was often chaotic: "Sometimes, indeed, the whole car was is turmoil, with everyone 'wailing, screaming and crying' in a coach that was 'absolutely packed' with 'kids standing in corridors, standing, sitting, lying" (Fast 31). At times the cars were filled with 150 children from the age of six-months to 14-years of age:

> *The train stopped several times in the night, and more children got on. The newcomers were packed into the aisles and sat wedged on top of their suitcases. At one stop a basket was shoved through an open window. Thinking that it might be a bomb, the children were afraid to open it. I found the courage to slide open the lid: Before me lay a baby, wrapped in clean blankets and sound asleep. The Dutch Red Cross collected the baby after the train arrived in Holland.* (Golabek 36)

The border crossing ran the full range from being routine, to abusively traumatic depending on whether they were conducted by border guards or the SS agents:

> Sometimes the solders' search was perfunctory, even kindly or occasionally generous. At other times a particular carriage might be uncoupled and the children made to undress while every piece of clothing and luggage was examined. (Fast 32)

Often Kinder reported that the guards confiscated the ten marks that each child was allowed to take out of the country or that their jewelry, watches and musical instruments were taken from them.

The Nazis demanded that the refugees were not to crowd German ports so the Kinder had to travel by train to Holland:

> *At the first Dutch station a large number of people were on the platform and as our train drew in they waved and cheered. We were momentary stunned and then*

> *returned the cheers and waved frantically. We were not only free, we were welcomed back to humanity by humanity.* (Gershon 28)

Once the children crossed the German border there was a huge cause for relief. There was a celebratory mood on the trains; for the first time in many years the children could curse Hitler and make derogatory jokes without fear of the Nazi's punishments. The terror felt at the border crossing was contrasted by the warm welcome that the Kinder received in Holland:

> Arrangements had been made with the Dutch government for these youngsters to cross through the Netherlands on their way to Britain. Dutch volunteers greeted the children and offered them cookies, lemonade, hot chocolate and sometimes games and dolls. (Fast 33)

The Kinder were overwhelmed by the kindness they received from Dutch volunteers that met the arriving trains. They stuffed themselves with sweets and enjoyed their newfound freedom from the Nazis and from the watchful eye of their parents.

From the Hook of Holland the children traveled by ferry to Harwick or Southampton. The trip across the English Channel was another stressful trial for the children that became seasick. It was the first time in many of their lives that they had to cope with illness without their parents to comfort them:

> *It was a rough crossing. We were all seasick. No mater what I tried, standing on the freezing deck looking down at the swirling water, lying on my bunk bead, eating, not eating, I felt miserable. On arriving in Southampton the next day, I still felt nauseous on the train to London.* (Fox 44)

Most of the trips across the English Channel were at night. The rough seas were frightening to the tired and apprehensive children:

> *It was only the English Channel, but it seemed a long, long way from home in 1939. It was a mixture of elation, yet within me was this fear, which never left me for those six years, fear for those we left at home.* (Gershon 20)

The first Kindertransport arrived in Harwich at 5:30 a.m., on Friday, December 2, 1939 with 230 children. Remarkably, this was only two weeks after the British government had accepted the proposal of the Jewish delegation. The second transport arrived ten-days later from Vienna with 630 children: "Thereafter there were at least two children's transports a week, until the movement reached its peak in June and July 1939, with transports arriving daily and all but overwhelming the organizers" (Fast 35). Most of the children came from Germany, Austria, or Czechoslovakia and a small group were from Poland.

When the Kinder finally arrived London, they were mentally, emotionally and physically exhausted:

> *My brother and I arrived in England in the first week of December 1938. We were seven and eight years old and I remember nothing of that historic moment except that it was dark and cold, the suitcase I had to carry was very heavy, and Harwich was a very difficult word to pronounce. I felt no sense of occasion or relief at having reached the land of freedom. We had been on the move for so many days now.* (Gershon 31)

Frequently the children faced another chaotic situation upon their arrival in England. For the first time the Kinder were confronted with the language barrier, a detail that many of their parents had neglected to inform them about. They were given tea with milk and white bread, which they had never seen or tasted before. Most of the Kinder thought that the bread was cake. Fatigue, bewilderment at the foreign surroundings and feelings of uncertainty prevailed for the anxious refugees:

> For the first hour after arrival at the station it was the adults more than the children who were likely to misbehave, for they might snatch a child without informing the organizers or show their terrible disappointment on seeing the youngster whom they were to foster. (Fast 36)

There were always instances where guarantors did not receive their children and children whose guarantors did not show up at the station. It was a bewildering situation for a child to feel that they were totally at the mercy of strangers and unable to communicate their needs:

> *Even though he had signed my sponsorship papers, my father's cousin met me at the train station and explained that he would not be able to take my younger sister and me to live with his family. I was taken to Bloomsbury House in London's West End. I was wedged in the huge coach with the rest of the other unclaimed children; there were dozens and dozens of them. I was sent to a relocation camp in Essex. The facility was a summer camp that had been utilized to house the hundreds of Kinder upon their arrival in England. The camp's cabins lacked heat and indoor plumbing which made the situation very difficult during the winter months.* (Golabek 45)

The children without guarantors were taken nearby to temporary shelters that had been set-up at summer camps in Dovercourt: "The accommodations at the camps might have been adequate in summer or even perhaps during a mild winter, but the winter of 1938-39 was one of the coldest on record" (Fast 36). The children were cold and went to bed with their coats and gloves on; the water pipes froze, as did the urine in the chamber pots during the nights:

> *A coach took us to Dovercourt. It was bitterly cold, and we were housed in chalets, using the main hall for meals, playtime and education in English. It took time getting used to the English porridge and Kippers! However, this was a comparatively happy time, I was eleven years old and did not understand...We had fun and I remember learning English songs, like Daisy, Daisy and Underneath the Spreading Chestnut Tree.* (Gershon 31)

Despite the rustic conditions at the camps, great effort was made to take care of the children's needs. Physicians were available, volunteers organized games, gave English lessons, and a school was set up where German speaking teachers taught the children about English customs and manners:

> *The community assisted in practical ways: one non-Jewish person drove 40-miles to bring sweets; a local dentist, also a non-Jewish, offered his services free of charge. Marks & Spencer provided surplus shoes and clothing, a butcher supplied beef sausages for the Sabbath meal. An anonymous friend sent a dozen cases of fruit every week for several months....Nine Jewish barbers gave up their free time and come down on Sundays to do haircutting. (Fast 37)*

The children's religious needs were also met. A German rabbi was part of the staff and the Sabbath was observed with both Orthodox and non-Orthodox services.

Regardless of the comfort measures the children were well aware that the camps were not meant to be home, but rather a way station before they were sent to foster homes. Often the children that were not placed in homes were boys who were then sent to hostels: "For the majority of Kindertransport refugees, the camps remained in their memory as their first impression of England, for better or worse" (Fast 38). Whether the children had willingly left home or they had experienced emotionally traumatic departures, suffice it to say, they were all strangers in a new land, dealing with much anxiety and fear about the future:

> *I remember realizing at Dovercourt that we were in a summer holiday camp and that we were refugees, fleeing in the real sense of the word, had to live here, in the cold chalets by the windy sea because there was nowhere else for us to go.* (Gershon 35)

Placing the children without sponsors in foster homes was an immediate priority for the organizers. Adults that wanted to take in a child were allowed to come to the camps and choose whomever they believed to be a suitable match: "The children were terribly apprehensive, not understanding English well enough to grasp the selection method. When one little girl heard her name called out, she cried, I've been sold" (Fast 41). The selection method may have been expedient but it was also very insensitive:

> *Prospective foster-parents were usually shown round at mealtimes, when we sat, boys and girls separately, according to age. The people walked down the rows of children, picking out this one or that, rather like a cattle market.* (Gershon 40)

The children who were not selected had to watch and wait as their companions were chosen and left for new homes. Younger, fair-haired girls were the most popular leaving the less attractive (i.e. Jewish looking) children with feelings of rejection.

Anna Essinger was a German born woman who had been educated in the United States and had established a progressive boarding school in Germany after WWI. She relocated the school to Bunce Court in Kent, shortly after Hitler came to power in Germany. She was appalled by the insensitive treatment the Kinder encountered at the relocations camps: "Anna Essinger was the person to whom the RCM turned when conditions for the 1,000 Kindertransport children who had recently arrived at freezing Dovercourt aroused alarm" (Oldfield 3). Essinger organized her staff and a group of volunteers to provide schooling and productive activities for the newly arrived Kinder at Dovercourt awaiting permanent housing arrangements: "Anna Essinger bitterly opposed the 'Sunday cattle market' when potential fosters would 'cherry pick' the unassigned children, leaving all too many to know they had been rejected--again" (Oldfield 3). Essinger was instrumental in changing the RCM's policy to one which assigned children to homes before meeting their sponsors. Her school, Bunce Court, served as home to many Kinder that she deemed to be gifted or that needed rescuing from unsuccessful foster home placements.

The foster parents preferred to take young children or older girls that could help out with housework or childcare. The older boys were more difficult to place

and were taken to hostels were they were cared for by paid English or German administrators. Generally, the older boys and girls adapted very well to the hostel environments where they were more independent and able to live with Jewish adolescents that shared their same interests and attitudes. But the living conditions varied greatly; a few of the hostels were operated like elite prep schools where the children received exceptionally good care and schooling, but most of the hostels were run as boarding houses were the level of care depended on the abilities and attitudes of the staff workers operating them:

> *At first there were eighty boys but the number varied throughout my stay. Although I am grateful to the people who paid money for the hostel and its upkeep, whose existence no doubt saved my life, I do not consider the hostel to have been a happy or pleasant experience. At the beginning the place was all right but later it got worse as there were changes in management. But of course the children were from different countries, different types of homes and would have been a miracle if we had all blended together in harmony.* (Gershon 81)

The German Zionist movement, Youth Aliyah, operated a hostel program that brought children to England to train them in farming techniques before sending them to Israel for resettlement.

> On arrival in England these young people were looked after by members of Habonim and taken immediately to David Eder Farm near Horsham in Sussex and to other training farms. These children indicated that their shared endeavor and socialist Zionist principals were the most important part of their identity" (Klienman 5).

The hostels that were operated by Jewish organizations worked well for Orthodox Kinder because they provided for their religious and cultural needs.

The experiences of the Kinder that were sent to hostels depended on many factors that included the children's age, their adaptability to living in an unfamiliar environment, and the conditions and atmosphere of the facility. Because the

conditions at the hostels varied, some of the Kinder enjoyed their stay while others complained of a Spartan and unsupportive atmosphere.

Care was taken to place siblings and twins together, but this was not always possible especially when there was a significant age gap or gender differences. Separating the siblings came as a terrible blow to younger children who looked to their older sibling for emotional support. Similarly the pain was deeply felt by the older child having been entrusted by the parents with the care of their younger brothers or sisters. The forced separation added to the emotional trauma that all of the Kinder experienced:

> *I hated leaving Vera at the station, not knowing what would happen to her, but I was told by whoever looked after us not to worry, she'd be all right, that her guardian would come for her. Then my sister disappeared through the side door, but came back and pushed a piece of paper into my hand and said, 'Look, this is my address. Send me yours the minute you arrive at your destination. I responded, 'Don't be afraid, you will always have me.' I was making a promise to myself that I would look after her, as well as a promise to her that I would be there for her.* (Harris 129)

There were instances where a foster parent offered to take one child and then being made aware that a sibling also needed a home, agreed to keep them together. Kinder that had siblings still remaining in Europe, were sometimes able to convince their foster families to sponsor a brother or sister back home and reunite them as a family. However, most often the separated siblings were placed in different areas and only saw each other occasionally, if at all:

> *Why my brother and I were not sent to England together I don't know. He came over a few weeks later and was sent to a different hostel in a different town. I did not see him again until 1943. It was really tragic that we were separated, as I'm sure had we been together it would have made a big difference to me. We have spent very little time together since then. We have only met once since. (Gershon)*

Finding Jewish homes for the Kinder became increasingly difficult as the number of children arriving exceeded the original projections for placements with foster parents that shared their religious beliefs. Orthodox Jewish homes were especially in short supply: "While there was a dearth of Jewish homes, hundreds of Gentiles offered hospitality" (Fast 44). The RCM was faced with no other option, short of discontinuing the program, but to place the children in non-Jewish homes. Elaine Bond of the RCM described the situation, "What we did was to accept as many children as we could get in - orthodox, liberal, and non-believing – on the assumption that all other problems were secondary" (Fast 45). Most of the RCM Jewish workers were not Orthodox or aware of the needs of observant Jews. This was evidenced by the fact that in the beginning days at Dovercourt no provisions were made to serve kosher food leading Chief Rabbi Dr. Hertz to demand that greater efforts be exercised to meet the religious requirements of the Orthodox Kinder:

> *The first morning I came down for breakfast and they served us something. I said, 'What kind of fish is this? The server looked at me and said, "What's the matter? You don't recognize bacon" That was the first time I had bacon in my life.* (Harris 141)

Nicolas Winton, a successful English Jewish stockbroker who organized an independent rescue effort in Czechoslovakia, was frustrated with the Orthodox community's reluctance to allow children without Orthodox sponsors to leave Europe. When Rabbi Schonfeld stopped a train from departing for England because it was a Saturday, Winton was quoted saying: "We were about saving lives not souls" (Kleinman 7). This statement illustrated the constant clash of religious objectives that would surround the Kindertransport movement throughout its duration.

English people from all walks of life and economic status came forward to sponsor children: "Initially, working-class families were considered too unstable financially to be guarantors, but as the number of children arriving far exceeded all expectations, so long as they passed the inspection any family willing to open their homes, even single women were recruited" (Fast 45). The foster families volunteered to host the Kinder for many different reasons: empty nesters had room to share, families believed hosting another child would provide companionship and an enriching experience for their own children. Childless couples hoped to adopt, while some families wanted older children to work as domestics or farm hands: "There were as many reason for accepting a refugee child as there were families opening their homes" (Fast 50). The foster parent's expectation as well as the children's bewilderment at their new situation was sure to present unexpected challenges for the host family and the Kinder.

> *I expected my guarantors were really very patient with me, they had heard of the novelty of bringing over a refugee girl as a mother's help, they had hoped to get a sort of maid, but they had not reckoned with my emotional problems, or with my anxieties for my parents. They had never heard of Vienna, only vaguely about us refugee children; they had never met a Jew face to face.* (Gorshon 63)

Just as the Kinder may have been surprised by the realities of their circumstances, the host families were not always prepared for the challenges that accompanied living with and caring for an adolescent youngster that was experiencing emotional loss and the onset of physical maturity all at the same time.

The British families that opened their homes to refugee children ran the gamut from rich to poor:

> *We arrived in England and were taken to the de Rothschild estate. My first impression of Waddesdon Manor was it was like a dream, like a castle I'd seen in*

> *pictures. It was so humongous. The Cedars was the servants' house. Twenty-six of us lived in the Cedars, three or four to a room. The first day that we got to the Cedars, the first thing we did was throw the soccer ball on the lawn and kick it around. The local boys came to see what was all of a sudden being brought into their little village. When it was time for dinner, they said, 'We'll see you tomorrow.' I was so excited. I was absolutely so exuberant. I ran into my housemother and told her, 'Somebody who's not Jewish wants to see us tomorrow.' I mean, we were absolutely just flabbergasted.* (Harris 140)

Britain was seen as a land of both physical and moral freedom to the children that had endured Nazi violence and persecutions:

> For Jewish children who had grown up under the anti-Semitic legislation of the Third Reich, increasingly segregated from the Aryan population and barred from all aspects of public life, Britain appeared to offer a much higher standard of living, in both an economic and moral sense. (Sharples 2)

The children that had endured Nazi hostilities for years now saw their life in Britain as an opportunity to enjoy freedoms that had been denied them at home such as going to the movies and being allowed to walk freely in the streets. England was considered a place of freedom and prosperity for many of the Kinder. Their arrival in England allowed them the opportunity to feel like children again.

The decision to sponsor a child was undoubtedly different for everyone. Charity, guilt, curiosity and personal gain were all factors that influenced the thousands of Britons that came forward with an offer to take in a Kinder. They set aside their hesitancies about Jews and their resentment toward German war mongering in a willingness to shelter a needy child. What no one could have foreseen at the time was the full extent of the commitment they were making both financially and emotionally.

Every potential foster parent had to complete an application that determined religious affiliation, head of household's occupation, sleeping and schooling

arrangements, religious, bank and personal references were required. Applicants were allowed to specify whether they wanted a boy or girl, age, religion and social position of the child. After being approved, the applicants had to sign a document promising that they would keep the child until the age of eighteen and would be willing to return the child to their parents should they be able to claim them at any time: "To become a foster parent was obviously an enormous responsibility and yet, amazingly, thousands of Britons responded without hesitation" (Fast 46). If a family was hesitant to agree to a long-term commitment without first getting to know the child, they were sometimes allowed a trial-period ranging between six-month to three-years:

> *I had stayed with a family for a few days in transit to a hostel. When, the family asked me if I wanted to stay with them - of course I was only too glad. The family consisted of an elderly couple and a single daughter in her early thirties and they did everything they could to make me part of their family circle. I felt secure with them and they never made me feel as if I was a burden to them. They were kind, quite unselfish, anxious to make me feel one of them, though I never quite got over the feeling of being a guest, especially the first year when I never dared ask for a second helping –unless they asked me first—fearing that I might be too expensive for them. They taught me many things in matters of taste (in literature and music) and, most important, they taught me to become English.* (Gorshon 59)

There are countless stories of Kinder that bonded with their foster families and where both parties established attachments that latest throughout their life times. The loneliness and fears that were part of the Kinder experience were much easier to bear when the placements of the children were successful.

The vast majority of Kinder attended school while they were in England: "The RCM reported that more that 6,000 refugees children attended school in the years 1939-44. British primary schooling ended at age 14 - if the student passed the entrance exams and had the money to pay for secondary education they were

allowed to matriculate to secondary schooling. If the child had no means to pay for school, they were required to enter training and apprentice positions to learn a trade: "An estimated 2,000 Kinder over the age of 16 were in training or apprenticeships during the 1940's" (Fast 75). Most of the Kinder children were eager to continue their education and determined to make something of themselves. Reported instances of crime and juvenile delinquency were rare.

Sponsoring host families supported the majority of Kinder, but children that did not have sponsors were "boarded out" to private homes and hostels. The refugee committees paid a stipend for their care, an amount that ranged from six-to-seventeen dollars per week depending on the child's age and location of his placement:

> *As a girl of fifteen I went into a non-Jewish foster home together with my brother, aged twelve, and my little sister, aged eight. We came from an orthodox background. I can still hear their taunts of 'Your own don't want you, so we took you in.' They received payment for our keep. I did the work, and later worked full time, handing in my wages intact, as did my brother at fourteen. The Refugee Committee did come on rare occasions to see us but always asked us about our care in front of the family, which made it impossible for us to answer frankly about our situation.* (Gershon 65)

The relief allotment was not sufficient to cover the entire cost of maintaining the child – the deficit was to be covered by the relief agencies but a shortage of funds was a constant issue for the program. Former Prime Minister Lord Baldwin made a radio appeal for public donations that brought in over 500,000 pounds. Funding remained a constant concern for the organizers because of the overwhelming numbers of Kinder arriving daily until the end of August 1939.

By the middle of 1940, the Jewish community donated an estimated amount of eight million pounds sterling to the refugee programs:

> Despite such massive giving, with the greatly increased flood of refugees after Kristallnacht the demands on relief agencies spiraled beyond expectations. For the months of January to July 1939 alone the Central Council for Jewish Refugees, the umbrella Jewish fund raising agency, spent 250,000 pounds on refugee relief while 'in all of the six previous years the JRC had spent (only) 233,000 pounds. Such a sudden and dramatic increase in expenditure exhausted the council's resources. (Fast 91)

The Quakers German Emergency Committee along with several other worldwide donations to organizations, had been paying for the refugees since 1933, but the need was far exceeded the available resources. The situation became so desperate that relief organizations were in danger of bankruptcy and having to close their doors:

> Sir Osbert Peake, who had been active in negotiations with refugee committees, warned of the 'appalling consequences which must follow if their Organization collapsed and if some 13,330 Jewish refugees were left to be maintained out of public funds', and of the anti-Semitism that would be sure to follow. (Fast 92)

The government came forward with a grant of 100,000 pounds to the agencies and an offer to pay half the cost of refugee's care up to a limit of 27,000 pounds. This solution helped stem the crisis, but funding problems were to persist throughout the duration of the Kindertransport program.

In addition to financial problems, the relief agencies had to deal with health concerns, emotional problems, familial disputes, and the myriad of issues that were a part of the life experience for the refugee children.

The organizers believed that it was best to spread the children throughout the British Isles so as not to overwhelm any one area:

> *To ensure the acceptance of these thousands of children in the community, and to avoid overt anti-Semitism, it was thought advisable not to billet too many in the same neighborhood or community. (Fast 48)*

The Kinder that were sent to remote areas in rural England found that they were the first German and the first Jew that the provincial villagers had ever seen; consequently they were greeted with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion:

> *I was the first refugee to arrive in Lincoln, so I was like a novelty to the town. There was a terrible void and a terrible loneliness.* (Harris 216)

Often there were misunderstandings about what the Kinder had experienced at the hands of the Nazis. People didn't realize that the Kinder had greater reasons than anyone to not support the Nazi regime and that even though the refugees may have been German - they harbored no sympathies toward the Third Reich.

The Kinder were instructed to be on their best behavior at all times and to show gratitude to their hosts. The German Jewish Aid Committee published a pamphlet entitled, *While you are in England*, filled with instructions for acceptable conduct. The urgency to learn English was strongly advised; the children were cautioned not to speak German too loudly, not to express criticisms or comparisons as to how things were done better in Germany. A letter from the chief rabbi, Dr. Hertz, expressed that the children should: "Behave quietly and politely, 'wait for your turn' before getting into buses, trains, etc., 'always remember to show your thanks for what is done" (Fast 48). Many of the children feared that if they were not *good* they would be sent back to Europe and therefore lived in fear of offending their sponsors:

> *I was very grateful to be in a loving family like the Rainfords, but when I arrived in England, I really felt as if I was being watched. I felt I was a representative, not just of my family, but also almost of my nation because I was so patriotic, and because hardly anything was known of Czechoslovakia in England in those days. So I tried very hard to be on my best behavior.* (Harris 131)

The Kinder were also very much aware that they had been the lucky ones' to escape from Hitler's persecution while their family and friends had not been as fortunate:

> *This hate, and hate is what it is, is bound up with a tremendous feeling of guilt, both in taking the atrocities as if they were my own, and inversely, for having gotten away so lightly. These very complex feelings ruined my adolescence, painfully prolonged into my twenties. (Gershon 141)*

This knowledge resulted in tremendous feelings of guilt, and the responsibility to be exemplary representatives of their homeland.

Letters from home joined the chorus with their own parental admonishments insisting that the children be unfailing in showing their gratitude: "Small wonder that some of the young people developed an *emotional resentment* against the constant reminders to always to be grateful, to be thankful, to be polite, to show 'first class behavior'" (Fast 49). Asking young children and adolescents to exemplify model behavior at all times was an unrealistic expectation and added to their feelings of frustration.

Many of the children came from large cities where they lived in comfortably appointed homes with servants. In England, they could be sent to a working-class home in London's East End or find themselves placed in a rural area without indoor plumbing or electricity where they'd be expected to help out with chores and physical labor:

> *As a girl of fourteen - a family in the East End of London took me in. Looking back now, I realize that they were very kind, generous, and well-meaning people. At the time it was for me rather shattering. They lived in a tiny terrace house on a dreadful little road. There was a workroom at the back where some sort of tailoring was done. There was no bathroom and I shared a bed with one of the daughters. We washed in the sink or went to a Public Bath. I had never seen such conditions and so felt rather awful.* (Gorshon 62)

The older children had to adjust to taking working class jobs that relegated them to a socially inferior status than they had know in Austria or Germany before the Nazi's sanctions toward the Jews:

> *I was sent to a foster home for a time as a boy of sixteen. What I have never been able to forget or forgive was the discrimination. I was given margarine when the rest of the family ate butter, on only one slice of bread was I allowed to put jam—the very jam for which I had collected in the brambles. When visitors came I was banished to the kitchen where I also had my meals. My position was somewhere between that of a poor relative and a domestic servant, without the privileges of the one or the rights of the other.* (Gorshon 63)

The class distinctions of English society were an issue for many of the Kinder:

> Being made to feel inferior had overtones for the Kinder who remembered only too well the feelings they had experienced after the Nazi takeover, when they were no longer allowed to attend school, to ride on certain buses or walk on certain streets –they were made to feel inferior, of no worth. (Fast 50)

The difference in England though, was the Kinder were not made to feel inferior to humiliate or dehumanize them as they had been at home and generally, they adapted the attitude, better this than Germany: "However, for those who did experience the negative impact of English society in the 1940's, it created one more hurdle to overcome and made adjustment just that much more difficult" (Fast 51).

Issues of acceptance added to the anxiety of being sent away from family and homes. Children that went to relatives that only accepted them out of obligation or under duress were made to feel unwelcome and were seen as an obligation: "Some were treated 'condescendingly' or as 'poor relations' or as a liability to Jews wishing to remain out of the limelight" (Fast 51). Many of these children resented being made to feel they were accepting charity or were an unwanted burden.

Sometimes the rejection came from the foster parent's children who resented having another child in the home:

> When the parent's own children proved to be jealous of the newcomer or disliked him or her, this tension exacerbated the child's loneliness and need for his or her own parents, and often resulted in feeling of acute depression. (Fast 51)

Depression happened to the children placed in kind and supportive homes as well. Instances of bed-wetting, nightmares, and running away were signals that the child was struggling emotionally: "Some developed eating and sleeping disturbances, some turned rebellious, and some became withdrawn" (Fast 53). A number of well-meaning sponsors found that they were either too old or too young for the task of dealing with a traumatized child in their home. Living with a stranger brought challenges that required patience and understanding from all sides.

Regardless of best intentions, the Kinder's behaviors and manners were different from English norms. Language and dress were the most obvious ways that Kinder stood out from the crowd: "It was awhile before Gunther realized that the way he greeted people must seem odd. There was no need to make a slight bow while clicking one's own heels" (Fast 54). The clothing that the Kinder's family had provided was frequently replaced soon after their arrival. Different sounding names could be a cause for teasing at school so the English foster parents often changed a child's name to a more English sounding one; they might have the child take the foster family's surname as well. The children were also encouraged to lose their German accents as quickly as possible. The natural inclination of the children was to want to fit in and not be seen as different. This meant that the Kinder were desperate to look and sound English as-soon-as they could:

> *There were several refugee children and our foster parents insisted that we should try to speak English among ourselves. They were both very kind but very severe. If we spoke German while we were at the table, we had to leave our meal and go straight to bed. This was the worst punishment given to us for any misdemeanor. Looking back now I feel grateful for their wisdom. In less than six months I not only understood simple conversation, but also was able to read newspapers and write. The teachers were proud of us and we would always be given as an example to the rest of the class.* (Gershon 87)

At the time, assimilation was seen as the best way to handle a child's adjustment to life in England, especially after war was declared. This would prove to be a problem for Kinder later on who struggled to form a sense of their own cultural identity.

Although not widely reported, physical, verbal or sexual abuse was an issue for some children adding another layer of psychological damage that Kinder would have to cope with well into their adult years. Generally, the majority of the Kinder were well treated by their foster families and by their English schoolmates as is evidenced over and over in the Kinder's testimonials regarding their experiences in England:

> The majority of Kinder remark on the kindness, understanding and love their foster parents and often even their school mates extended and admiration for the way the people conducted themselves during the bitter days of war. (Fast 53)

Each one of the Kinder had their own story and the circumstances that predicated their arrival in London played a large roll as to how easily they would adjust to their new homes and living situation. The overriding reality for the Kinder was that they were now adjusting to a new home, family, school, and culture. They had abruptly been sent away from everything that was familiar and were continuing to live with an uncertainty as to what the future would hold.

On September 3, 1939, England declared war on Germany marking the beginning of the Second World War and the end of the Kindertransport. During the course of ten months, nearly 10,000 children were brought to safety in England. It was a remarkable accomplishment for the organizers and an extraordinary outpouring of generosity by the British people – but this was not the end of the

story. Many challenges lay ahead for the Kinder and for Britain – a nation that was now at war.

The English government knew that London would be a target for enemy bombing. A plan to evacuate all children under eighteen years of age – known by the code name, *Pied Piper*, was put into motion on September 1, 1939. Approximately 3,000 Kinder along with thousands of British school children were evacuated to the countryside. Just as the newly arrived refugees were getting accustomed to their new homes, they were uprooted once again:

> The children were tagged again with their names ... were still in the first confusion of the bewildering change of circumstances, unsettled and homeless. Orders had to be repeated in German because so many of the youngsters didn't understand English. (Fast 62)

The Kinder that were evacuated with their schools had a better time with the ordeal than the children that were placed individually in remote areas:

> *During the Blitz in 1940, I was in evacuated to Devon. About a dozen of us won scholarships to Triverton Grammar School, and in retrospect I realize that this school had more influence on us than can be conceived. The teachers overcame all our psychological impediments and molded us into young men who could fit easily into English society. (Gorshon 122)*

Relocation centers were set up in village schools, recreation halls and churches where the Kinder would wait for placements with new foster parents:

> When children were left without a billet at the end of the day, placement officers would go from door to door, accompanied by the hapless and tired youngsters, and not infrequently forced an unwilling householder to accept an evacuee. (Fast 63)

The resiliency required of the young children was quite extraordinary. The fact that they had to endure and adjust to separations continually was a fact of life for the

refugees; this situation would cause difficulties with feelings of belonging and separation later in their lives.

> *I was just getting used to the Rainfords and their way of life when, barely two months after my arrival in England, I was evacuated to a little town outside Southport. I was now faced with another strange family and a very different lifestyle. (Harris 202)*

Not all of the Kinder were evacuated to the English countryside during the war. Some of the younger children were allowed to stay with their adopted families in the city and the older Kinder continued to work at their job placements:

> *One day, around six o'clock, before it was even dark, the siren sounded and what was known as the Coventry Blitz started. The whole night bombs rained down. We were in one of the boarding houses, and that was bombed. There was a big fire and everyone rushed out. (Harris 208)*

The children that stayed in urban areas had to endure the terror of war and bombardment from German forces. When the Jewish hostels were damaged, the Kinder were sent to live with non-Jewish sponsors until the hostels were repaired and they could return.

Again, placing the children in Jewish homes was a difficult challenge; the evacuation to the countryside added to the dilemma because most of England's Jews lived in urban areas: "Isolated children not only experienced greater loneliness, but they were also frequently the object of suspicion among locals" (Fast 63). In some remote villages the residents may never before seen a Jewish person. The scattering of Jewish children made it difficult to maintain their religious practices. British Jewry feared that the children would lose touch with their faith:

> They are let loose in entirely strange townlets and villages, and unless some meeting place and controlling influences are established...we are faced with the probability of losing the loyalty of an entire Jewish generation. (Fast 64)

Chief Rabbi Hertz organized a canteen program for areas where a large Jewish evacuee population lived: "Sometimes the canteen found a home in a caravan, trailer, school room or even church hall" (Fast 64). The canteens served kosher meals, provided entertainment and companionship that successfully kept the Jewish children close to their religious roots. However, those children in isolated areas had to rely on their foster parent's willingness to make accommodations for the children's religious rites.

> *When I was living with the Rainfords, they took me to church with them, but they did not try to make me into a Methodist. I spent the time in church happily singing hymns, and otherwise thinking of my parents. I felt it wasn't a bad thing to go to church. Surely it didn't matter where I worshiped as long as I believed in God, and as long as I prayed for the safety of my parents.* (Harris 203)

The Jewish community was very concerned about conversion to Christianity. There were documented cases of Christian conversion but in the end the actual number of baptisms was low:

> Whether there were few or many conversions, or whatever the circumstances of their conversion, every child mattered to the Jewish community. Even a few conversions were too many. (Fast 85)

The Orthodox community remained adamant that the Jewish children should be removed from non-Jewish homes "Since too few Jewish homes were available, hostels or Jewish schools were prepared to receive these youngsters" (Fast 86). The children that were well settled with their foster families had no desire to leave because they did not want to experience another uprooting. The challenge regarding placement of Jewish children in Christian homes was never resolved

In 1940, the children aged 16 and above were sent from the evacuation camps to alien internment camps on the Isle of Man. The camps were hastily established

and had mostly substandard accommodations. Within a year, the British government realized that it was unnecessary to intern the Kinder refugees and most were released from internment camps to return to hostels. Some of the Kinder enlisted in Pioneer Corps, a designated military support unit; later the refugees were allowed to enlist in the British armed forces and went on to serve honorably in combat, as interpreters, and nurses: "Altogether, 754 boys and 157 girls enlisted, of these, 30 were killed in action" (Fast 73). Most of the Kinder were very happy to be serving the Allied Forces:

> *As a soldier, suddenly I was in an environment where I was the same as everybody else – for the first time in my life. In Lincoln I more or less 'existed', because I was waiting for tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow. In the army – 277072 was my number – I felt like everybody else. For the first time in my life I felt that I could do everything the other people were doing. If I felt lonely and didn't have a home, there were others who didn't have a home. They were separated from their families too, in a different way, but it was a great equalizer for me. (Harris 216)*

The Kinder thought that serving in the war effort was a way to pay back England for saving their lives.

After the war was over the Kinder were to face yet another trauma – learning the fate of their parents:

> *I remember VE Day very clearly; it was just wonderful, wonderful. We danced in Piccadilly Circus. And for me, I just thought, well this is it. I'm going to see my parents next week. That's all one thought about.* (Harris 220)

As the news reports came out showing the horrors of the concentration camps the Kinder began to understand that their parents might not have survived the Holocaust. Letters were sent through the Red Cross that would be returned after months of waiting:

> *The letters were returned to me, about three, four months later – it took a long time. All it said on the back was: 'Deported to Auschwitz. That was how I found out. (Harris 220)*

After about a year, published list of the dead were posted at English post offices and at Bloomsbury House in London. Seeing the names posted on the list was the final confirmation for most of the Kinder that their parents had perished:

> *I was devastated. The world had collapsed. I was about twenty then and everything had changed. I felt lost. Between the ages of fourteen and twenty, I was waiting and waiting, biding time as opposed to living life. (Harris 220)*

The realization that they were now truly orphans came as a difficult shock. Again the Kinder were forced to deal with feelings of loss and separation.

When it was clear that a great number of children would not be reunited with their natural parents, it became necessary to provide these orphaned children with legal guardians. In 1943, after much discussion among the various organizations, it was agreed that Lord Gorell, of the RCM would be appointed to serve as the legal guardian of all refugee children in England. Gorell was against the removal of children from their foster homes to hostels and schools: "The uprooting of a child from its home might do irreparable damage after a period of five years of happy, settled life" (Fast 87). In the end the refugee committees, excepting the Orthodox, agreed that it was not necessary to remove Jewish children from their non-Jewish foster homes unless the child was unhappy.

The 100 or so Kinder who discovered that their parents were alive often faced conflicting emotions when they were reunited with their natural parents: "This was not necessarily a happy time for the Kinder, parents or assisting agencies. Some children had deep feelings of anger toward parents who, they felt, had abandoned

them" (Fast 166). Both children and parents were dealing with the reality that they were strangers to one another. There were many factors that contributed to this: language barriers, cultural differences and personal behaviors were now seen as foreign to children that had been raised in England. The parents that survived the camps carried emotional scars: "As one child remarked, 'how does one relate to a mother who has been in Auschwitz? I got a different mother back" (Fast 167). The parents were physically and emotionally damaged and unable to respond to their children's needs:

> *My parents let go of a seven-year old and got back a sixteen-year-old. My mother especially wanted to carry on where she'd left off. But a sixteen-year-old doesn't like to be treated like a seven-year-old. (Harris 234)*

Many of the children were so young when they had left, that they didn't recognize their parents when they were reunited. The Kinder had lost their ability to speak German and couldn't even converse with their parents:

> *Meeting this odd duck of a woman who seemed to work at being as far removed from my invented, ideal Mother as anyone could get, certainly seemed to me to be the most disastrous thing that had ever happened. (Milton 196)*

The adjustments for Kinder with surviving parents were complex – feelings of resentment, shame and anger were common and added to the emotional difficulties that many experienced after the war ended.

Despite the fact that officially, the Kindertransport ended on August 31, 1939, three days prior to Britain and France declaring war on Germany -- the term was also used to describe the Second-Wave effort to bring children that survived the war to England:

> Rabbi Schonfeld, however, continued to use the term, Kindertransport, in relation to children brought from Europe after the war, whether to refer to

> those who had been in concentration camps or those who had been in hiding. (133)

This group of refugees had experienced a much different story than the children that arrived prior to the war; it became clear they would require a different sort of care. The Jewish Community's original concept was to save the children that had been taken to the concentration camps – initially no one conceived of the fact that most of these children had died: "The Nazis regarded children under the age of ten as 'unproductive eaters', so they were almost immediately exterminated" (Fast 134). Upon arrival at the camps all males and females were separated regardless of their age; most of the women and children and were killed soon after arriving.

The males had a chance at survival if they could work. If a girl was spared, she was put to work cleaning machinery, loading materials and supplies, or recycling the clothing of dead prisoners into textiles for German use. The boys were sent to work crews to provide manual labor for building roads, or caring for livestock: "Most survivors also eventually endured the death marches and notorious open railway cars, when prisoners were moved to avoid liberation by the Soviets and sometimes by Western armies" (Fast 134). By the spring of 1945, the conditions at the camps were beyond human comprehension: One newspaper correspondent wrote, "It is my duty to describe something beyond the imagination of mankind.' Yet, some children survived even these horrors" (Fast 135). The young people that had survived starvation and disease looked like walking skeletons; to think that children had been subjected to such horrors was the ultimate tragedy of the War and the world was struggling to come to terms with the recognition of this fact.

The British post war orphans committee became the Committee for the Care of Children from the Camps: (CCCC). This committee was organized by experienced Kindertransport relief workers who then took on the task of quickly putting together a plan to bring the young camp survivors to Britain. The Central British Fund agreed to pay for the children's maintenance and expenses. Otto Schiff wrote in the *Jewish Chronicle*:

> The Jewish Refugees Committee, in conjunction with the Friends Committee for Refugees and aliens has received permission to bring 1,000 children from the concentration camps. What is to happen to them when convalescence has been completed need not be discussed at the moment though it can assuredly not be far from the mind of all concerned. (Fast 135)

The CCCC focused their attentions on the immediate need to provide physical and mental rehabilitation for the children that had survived the Nazi death camps.

On August 25, 1945, the first of the Second Wave of children, 150 orphaned Czech and Polish refugee boys, were flown to England by Royal Air force transit planes and were taken to hostels for accommodation and medical care. The condition of these children made it difficult to determine their actual ages; some of the boys were much older than the legal maximum age of 16. Malnutrition made them appear to be younger than their actual age and no one had any form of identification. Never the less, immigration authorities allowed all of the boys to remain in Britain:

> It may be that no group of immigrants has ever entered this country with a more sympathetic welcome or with fewer formalities. The Immigration authorities made everything easy – no questions asked....We took the good with the bad, the sick with the healthy, the whole with the maimed and there were many maimed in mind and body - it was completely unselective immigration. (Fast 137)

These innocent children had been forced to endure a man-made living hell – the British once again opened their doors to children, but this time it was to provide a place for respite and recuperation as opposed to a safe haven from war.

The children that were brought to England frequently had severe physical and emotional damage: "These children had seen and experienced at eight, ten, twelve years of age, more than anybody present had, whatever their age" (Fast 158). A significant number of children were depressed and required patience and counseling; the relief organizations were frequently overwhelmed by the needs of these emotionally wounded children:

> What many of the survivors desperately needed and what even the sympathetic Jewish community was often unable to provide was a listening ear to hear the horrific experiences that left many of them with terrible nightmares and a great need to regain a measure of healthy self-respect. (Fast 159)

Before being liberated, the children had been surviving on food rations of one slice of bread per day and a pint of soup made from turnip and potato peels. The refugees were weak and suffered from tuberculosis among other illnesses. From August 1945 – January of 1946, the camp survivors arrived from various points throughout Europe. Of the original goal of 1,000, only 732 surviving children could be located and brought to England.

A "hidden child" referred to the Jewish children throughout Europe that spent the war hidden from the Nazis. Hiding their children from Nazi persecution with a Gentile employee, colleague or friend was a decision that many Jewish parents made up until September of 1941 – when all Jews over the age of six were forced to wear the Jewish star armbands that singled them out:

> They rarely included provision for hiding the parents, for it was easier to hide a child or even several children than an entire family, and these parents were prepared to sacrifice their safety for that of their children. (Fast 139)

The Nazi's requirement that all Jews wear armbands was a seminal moment because it put all Jews at risk by formally identifying them and making it much harder to hide.

The decision for a parent to send their child into hiding was just as wrenching as the Kinder parents' act of sending their child away: "It was an incredibly difficult situation for parents forced either to relinquish their child to strangers or put their offspring's life at risk by having him or her remain at home" (Fast 141). The emotional trauma that the parents' experienced by sending their child away is beyond comprehension.

The safest course of action for a child in hiding was for them to assimilate into their sheltering family's home life and routines. This meant that a Jewish child had to consciously forget their Jewishness:

> All hidden children had to bury their Jewish identities and backgrounds. The child was given a new name and family history. False identity papers provided a new place of birth and the names of bogus parents. (Fast 142)

Consequently, many children came to adopt the Christian faith. The children hidden in private homes went to church with their Christian families and children that were taken in at Catholic convents were thoroughly immersed in the Catholic faith. Young children were especially drawn to conversion because of this situation. The act of sheltering a Jewish child was courageous in that the penalty of discovery could mean huge financial penalties, prison or even death. Regardless of this imminent danger, hundreds and perhaps thousands of Europeans were willing to take the risk.

Whether motivated by their humanitarianism or religious convictions, they made it possible to save at least a portion of the Jewish children in Europe from the Holocaust.

After the war, the Jewish community was adamant that the hidden children should be returned to Jewish homes or orphanages. Rabbi Schonfeld led the attempt to bring these hidden children over to England after the war, but his efforts were met with enormous difficulties: removing children from adopted families, lack of financial resources and a reticence amongst the British Jewish community to assume responsibility for the children meant that very few of the hidden children were actually sent to England after the war.

It is important to recognize that the British nation was willing to step forward again and provide a post-war haven for children that were the victims of the German atrocities regardless of whether they were hidden children or camp survivors.

The original plan was for the camp children to emigrate within two years of their arrival in Britain, but the majority of them remained in England. Eventually the Jewish post war refugees were integrated into the British community. The majority left the hostels after they matured and either continued their education, entered the workforce or emigrated:

> *I was naturalized under a special scheme introduced after the war for young people like me who had gone to foster homes and whose parents were dead, as we could not be legally adopted until we were English subjects. (Gershon 127)*

By 1950, most of the refugee organizations that had made the Kindertransport possible had disbanded and closed their operations. The children that they had

saved were now in their teens or older. By 1950, the British government had offered citizenship to the Kinder, camp survivors and post war refugees that were still living in Britain. It is generally true that most of the refugees wanted to forget their painful past and get on with their lives. They went on to finish educations, build careers and raise their own families.

It was not until nearly 40 years after the war that these refugee children began to come forward with a desire to share their childhood experiences with other Kinder that had endured similar circumstances. In 1989, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Kindertransport, Bertha Leverton organized the first reunion for the Kinder in England. Not all former refugee children were receptive to the idea of attending the reunions. One Kinder expressed the following sentiments:

> *I was not particularly keen to attend, largely because my memories of that grim journey were something I had been doing my best to forget. I remembered the fear, the uncertainty, the loneliness....There were too many ghosts and I did not wish to disturb them. (Fast 164)*

Many Kinder initially shared these same apprehensions but more than 1,000 survivors and their families attended the first reunion. The event was to become a catalyst for subsequent conferences and gatherings that provided a forum for Kinder to share their stories and experiences. The opportunity to express their emotions and feelings proved to be a therapeutic experience for the survivors.

The reunion's records and the resulting published memoirs and autobiographies have made it possible for historians to form a picture of what happened to the Kinder after the war:

> Kindertransport reunion records reveal that the majority of Kinder stayed in Great Britain, though as many as could, especially those the Youth Aliyah sponsored emigrated to Israel. Approximately 25 percent of the Kinder

> eventually left for the United States, Canada or other parts of the world. (Fast 164)

Not many of the Kinder returned to Europe and those that did after witnessing the destruction of their homes and former neighborhoods decided to return to England or to immigrate to other countries including Israel and the United States.

Painful memories of the survivors whether they were Kinder, hidden children or concentration camp survivors touched everyone in varying degrees:

> Many Kinder, as well as hidden and camp children, grieved the loss of their childhood and lamented the need to become mature and independent at an age when most youngsters could still be carefree and reliant on their parents. (Fast 181)

The adult Kinder manifested numerous difficulties with familial relationships; these difficulties affected their children as well. Problems with feelings of belonging, being different, fears of separation, and a need to suppress painful memories of loss were recognized by almost every adult Kinder:

> *My mother rarely told stories about her childhood home, family, friends, escapades, school, celebrations, journeys, or any of the insignificant details that offer intimacy. Scarce was the emotional mementos and family photographs that might prove she had a past. I tried a few times to learn her story, but she would start crying, then I would start crying, and I'd retreat – out of love for my mother. Her grief was vast and deep. My brother, sister and I understood not to ask questions. (Harris)*

Shattered childhood memories made it difficult for grown up Kinder to share the details of their youth and family roots with their own children. They struggled with parenting skills and thus experienced dysfunctional relationships within their own families. The second-generation of Kinder, also know as K2, have benefited from the Kinder reunion forums and many have chosen to carry on with maintaining the

association for the future through conferences, newsletters and an informational web site.

The ability to process the past and adjust to life as adult survivors according to Ruth Michaelis, a *Kind* and psychotherapist who studied the former Kindertransportees, depended on three conditions:

> The amount of stability in the family prior to separation, the developmental stage of the child at the time, and most importantly whether they continued to have contact with someone who represented a link with the past, the old familiar world. (Fast 182)

Although all of the Kinder carry emotional wounds from their experiences, records indicate that the number of individuals that either sought or required psychological treatment for mental disorders was relatively small and that the vast majority managed to cope remarkably well as adults.

As adults the Kinder were generally determined and driven to be successful and to make something of themselves:

> *There's been a determination in all of us to make good, to prove Hitler wrong, and through our children and grandchildren, and future generations, to show that we have survived...Hitler could take all our material possessions, our money, our jobs and our homes but he could not touch what we had in our heads and hearts and these were the assets with which we could build a new life for ourselves and our children.* (Harris 253)

Many of the Kinder went on to distinguish themselves in the sciences, arts, academia, politics, business, and as human rights activists.

The refugee children through an unprecedented historical event were uprooted in a frantic and desperate attempt to save their lives. Their departure was full of daunting uncertainties and constituted a leap of faith for everyone involved:

> The story of the survivors is one of courage, and strength, of people who are living proof of the indomitable will of human begins to survive and of their

> tremendous capacity for hope. It is not a story of a remarkable people. It is a story of just how remarkable people can be. (Fast 184)

Britain's willingness to step forward represented an unprecedented act of decency and morality:

> The United Kingdom accepted more refugees than any other Western nation. Thousands of British people opened their homes and often their hearts to the 'strangers within their gates' and millions of pounds sterling were donated without any thought of reimbursement. (Fast 193)

The Kindertransport evacuation to Britain from, December 1938 – September 1939, remains to this day a singularly unique and remarkable story of humanitarianism, compassion and sacrifice. Thanks to the actions of British politicians, Judeo-Christian religious leaders, British and European community organizers, and countless volunteers 10,000 predominantly Jewish children were rescued from Nazi persecution. Fewer than 1400 Kinder would ever see their parents again (Bailey 1). Most of the children remained in Britain after the war; saved from Hitler's tyranny but still trying to cope with the after effects of the traumatic separation from their families and their heritage.

Diane Samuels' award winning play, *Kindertransport* goes beyond the life-saving effect of the event to reveal the emotional repercussions of separation and abandonment that many Kinder experienced well into their adult lives. Her fictional dramatization is drawn from the actual events that the "Kinder generation" experienced.

Part Two: Preparing for the Role – Becoming Ava

What did I have in common with a nine-year old, German, Jewish girl? Six months ago, I would have said, nothing. Betty Bernhard once told me that it is important to play against type because that is how you grow as an actor. Her words rang true for me. I can definitely confirm that playing the role of Eva was a tremendous journey of growth for me as a person and as an actor.

My character's overarching objective in the play, *Kinderstransport,* is her desire to find safety. Eva keeps asking the questions Helga is unable to answer: "Why won't you help me?" "Why do I have to be able to manage on my own?" "Why must I lick the thread?" These unanswered questions haunt Eva for the rest of her life. They are part of the transformation that turns Eva into Evelyn and why Eva remains in the attic until Faith opens the box. She wants to know why she is being sent away, why she has to learn to sew on the buttons, why the permits are such a big deal, and finally why she will be safer living with strangers. Helga's ambiguity causes Eva to believe that like the ungrateful children in her favorite story, *The Ratcatcher of Hameln*, she too will be led away by the vengeful Pied Piper.

The challenge for me as an actress was to capture Eva's naïveté and yet have an underlying knowledge of the tensions influencing her family: the need to get her out to safety, and the urgency to get the permits for her parents to leave Germany. Eva is only nine years old and doesn't understand the full extent of the political events that are engulfing her world. This leads to her confusion as to why she is being sent away, her resistance to evacuate with the other children after war breaks

out, and the frustration she experiences when, after getting the permits, her parents still don't come to England. The historical events are a very important backdrop for the play. It was important for me to have a thorough understanding of the circumstances that Eva endured.

My preparation started with a visit to the National Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C., and the Museum of Tolerance in Los Angeles. Spending time at these two outstanding museums gave me invaluable insight into the historical events that inspired the theme of the play. One of the most vivid memories that I took away from the Holocaust museums was the enormous pile of worn shoes that were displayed to represent the victims. In the days before the play opened, our scenic designer, Logan Wince, laid out the shoes that encircled the stage. At that moment, I was struck by the fact that our play was going to present the memory of the Holocaust to a new generation.

The interviews that I conducted in Los Angeles with three surviving Kinder and two concentration camp victims gave me an opportunity to relate to the actual events. Additionally, I researched books, videos and Internet sources on the Holocaust and the Kindertransport. The book, *Children's Exodus* by Vera K. Fast, provided a comprehensive historical record of every aspect of the Kindertansport from inception, to post war, and finally the first Kinder reunion in 1985. Two books authored by Kinder - *My Heart in a Suitcase* by Anne L. Fox and *We Came as Children* by Karen Gershon – provided great insights into the Kinder experience.

The book and video, *Into The Arms of Strangers* written and produced by Deborah Oppenheimer and directed by Jonathan Harris, presented extraordinarily

moving testimonies from surviving Kinder. I attended a wonderful stage production based on the life story of a fourteen-year-old music prodigy, Lisa Jura, who was sent to London as a *kinder*. Her daughter, Mona Golabek, acclaimed concert pianist and author of the book *The Children of Willesden Lane*, presented the stage version of her mother's memoirs of being a Kinder and her mother's eventual triumph as a virtuoso pianist. Golabek's one-woman show featured her playing the piano while using her mother's own words to tell the story.

Even though *Kindertransport* is about the relationships among the women in the play, it was important for me to grasp the circumstances that drive their actions and objectives and how this relates to the characters' motivations. The time spent researching was a very fulfilling experience for me. The process gave me a context for understanding the tensions, emotions, and pathos that drives the play's plot. Additionally, I developed knowledge, understanding and empathy for the historical, familial, political, and most importantly, the personal circumstances that were a part of this seminal period in history.

In an interview with Kinder Ralph Samuels, he stated that the most difficult thing about being a Kind*er* was the guilt that they feel as survivors. The fact that they lived and not their family and friends haunts every Kinder.

The need to suppress survivor's guilt and the anger at being sent away are the two emotions that fuel Eva's character conflicts. Her repressed emotions from childhood haunt her throughout her life and finally boil over in the play's climax. The author establishes this in the play's first scene. Helga sends Eva away to save her, but Eva it not able to understand. She thinks that she is being sent away

because she was naughty. In the play's final scene Eva admits that she would have chosen to stay and die with her parents rather than spend a life filled with resentment and guilt.

The non-linear time sequencing in the play was essential to understanding Eva's character development. The play's scenes that are set in the present provide an awareness of what Ava was experiencing as a child. To play Eva, I couldn't think of myself in the past tense because it was the present for my character. However, the events of the present inform my character. Evelyn makes the statement, "The whitewash has been stripped away and underneath is pure filth" (Samuels 55). This statement reveals how Eva sees her past – it is filth that must be hidden.

Lil Miller, Eva's English foster mother, acts as a bridge that connects the past with the present. She lives in both periods – the fact that she in going back and forth between the sequences helps the audience make the connections between the separate times. In Act II, Scene I, Lil says, "I saved you." Evelyn responds, "Part of me is dead because of you" (61). Lil and Evelyn are referring to the past. In the next sequence we flash back to the Manchester train station and Eva is tearing off her jewelry. She asks Lil, "How long can I stay with you?" This moment is a pivotal moment for Eva because it accelerates her transformation into Evelyn. Playing Eva, it was important to see that Evelyn actually never comes to terms with the rejection of her past and she harbors resentment toward Lil for this. It is clear that Evelyn is trying to be the person that she has created, but deep inside she is still Eva. These lines were a clue from Diane Samuels for me to play Eva as a very strong little girl. The present very much informed my character in the play.

In Act I, Scene I, the author sets up the fact that Eva, Evelyn and Faith are parallel characters. The play begins with both daughters packing. Helga is encouraging Eva to feel positive about leaving. Faith is moving to her first apartment, but contrastingly, Evelyn does nothing to reassure Faith that she should go. Evelyn equates Faith's departure with the terrible fear that Eva experienced when leaving her family. In this first scene, Eva is desperate to understand why her mother thinks that she will be better off living with strangers than her parents. Helga's dismissive attitude toward Eva's inquires forms the basis of the inadequacy and resentment that Eva will feel throughout her life. Evelyn's reluctance to let Faith go equates to the trauma of her own departure from Hamburg -- making her incapable of dealing with Faith's need for reassurance. Eva is creating the memory by putting things into the suitcase and Faith is unpacking the memory.

The non-linear sequencing continues when Faith is reading the letter that Eva is composing as a child. At the same time both girls are searching to find something and fulfill an elusive desire. When Faith asks Lil about the mysterious little German girl she says, "What happened to her, did you kill her and try to hide the evidence?" (31). Lil's wounded reaction causes Faith to realize the truth. Samuels uses Faith's character as a metaphor. She is the key that will release Eva from the attic of Evelyn's subconscious. Faith allows Evelyn to release Eva so that she can go on.

Faith says, "I have never been a good enough daughter" (44). Eva shares Faith's feelings of inadequacy; this duality is confirmed when Lil compares her granddaughter to Evelyn by saying: "You're more like your mother than you know"

(68). Faith asks the question, "Isn't it hard starting from scratch?" (81). This statement is a key to understanding why Evelyn can't resume her relationship with Helga. In Eva's final scene with Helga, her mother says that she survived the horrors of the death camps so that she could come back for Eva. Eva started from scratch in England and she's not able to start over again with Helga in New York.

The theme of survival is perhaps one of the most powerful aspects of the play. All of the female characters are survivors. Lil's character believes that survival is all about moving forward. Life for Lil means being practical – anything that serves no purpose for the present has no meaning. She knows that the sooner Eva adapts to her life in England, the better off she will be. Learning English, eating the ham sandwich and forgetting Jewish traditions are seen as the best way for Eva to assimilate to her circumstance. Lil's insensitivity to Eva's need to cling to her heritage is not an overt desire to change her, but rather a means for solving the more immediate requirement for Eva to adapt to her new surroundings. It was important for me to convey this evolution so that the audience would understand and empathize with Eva's efforts to first try desperately to hang onto her past, and then see the shift when she determines to suppress it. When Eva sees the newsreel footage of the concentration camps she knows that it should affect her viscerally, but she has worked so hard to suppress that part of herself she doesn't know how, or what kind of emotion she should express.

All of the female characters in the play are survivors. Throughout my life, I have been exposed to strong women that are also survivors. The idea that you must

do what is necessary in order to survive is part of my DNA and thus allowed me to directly relate to the essence of the characters in Samuels' play.

Monique Saigal, a Pomona College Professor, and a hidden child Holocaust survivor said for many years she "still had a hidden life" (Saigal 11). Samuels' play *Kindertransport,* suggests that only by confronting the suppressed fears can the survivor be liberated from their self-imposed hiding places.

Eva's relationships with the other female characters in the play provided the means for me to be specific and to identify the tactics that I could use to capture Eva's character arc.

Helga and Eva's relationship is the most contrasting. There is a huge shift in their interdependency. In Act I, Eva wants desperately to stay in Germany with her mother, Helga. In Act II, she adamantly wants her mother to leave. There is a complete role reversal for the two women with Helga assuming the possessive role while Eva assumes the rejecting posture. Eva wants Helga to apologize for sending her away while Helga believes that Eva should be grateful that she survived. Eva wishes that Helga had never returned while Helga wants Eva to leave her new life, come away with her and begin again in New York. Helga wants her little girl back and Eva wants her mother to see that she can't go back. Each character has totally different objectives and neither is willing to understand what the other person needs.

Lil's earthy character is the antithesis of Helga's elegance. She is always honest with Eva and treats her like an adult. She doesn't conceal the truth about her parents needing to be servants if they want to get permits and later, Lil doesn't hide

the fact that they aren't coming. When Eva jumps off the train, she asks Lil: "Have I been very naughty?" Lil replies, "No, I'm the one that got it wrong" (59). Eva and Lil's relationship is based on honesty. This allows Eva to trust Lil and to feel safe with her. Lil and Eva share the bond of having survived the traumatic events of war together. Eva spends her important, formative years with Lil and not Helga. Eva's connection with Lil is based on trust and caring, while her relationship with Helga is filled with suspicion and rejection.

Eva and Evelyn are one-in-the-same. Eva is the justification for Evelyn—the transformation of the bright, energetic and optimistic child to the emotionless, stiff, guilt ridden, and insecure adult. At the end of Act I, she clearly feels the need to protect Eva from falling into the abyss: "I'll do everything I can to stop him. You'll see. You're with me now" (46). Evelyn is subconsciously keeping Eva in the attic so that her memories won't die. It was important to make Eva a vivid character, one that could not ever be completely forgotten regardless of how hard Evelyn might try.

Faith is the child that gains her heritage while Eva is the child that loses her past. Both are characters that are fully in touch with their emotions. They each blame Lil and their real mothers for hiding the truth from them. Both girls play the harmonica and this connects them in an illusionary way. Faith represents renewal and the next generation of Eva.

All of the male characters in the play are different but they represent the same thing -- authority. Each man wears a uniform and each threatens to send Eva back, either physically or mentally, to Germany. The SS Guard says he might send

her back after discovering the forbidden mouth organ. He physically gropes her while taking her money, and as he leaves he throws candy to her after caressing her head. His commanding size and the sexual connotations of his actions make him even more sinister.

The moment that Eva meets the English Organizer in the London train station is especially poignant. He is wearing a suit and therefore reminds Eva of her father. He offers Eva his handkerchief and Eva believes that he will take care of her. The scene offered a nice comic interlude for the audience. I try to follow him and when we sit together on the train bench, I scoot next to him clutching my doll and hoping that we can be a family. When he leaves me the audience feels Eva's sense of abandonment and loneliness.

The Postman scene presents both menacing and comic interludes for Eva. After realizing that he is play-acting at being a Nazi, Eva sees him as a buffoon. She is in the driver's seat and tells him that he is nothing like the real thing. Their roles reverse and he assumes the driver's seat when he forces Eva to remember Hitler, the German girls that said she smelled, and being forced to salute, *Heil Hitler*. Eva asks, "Which smells more, German or Jew?" (50). The Postman's response, "Same difference, Love," reveals that prejudice toward Jews exists in England. He is reinforcing the idea that Eva should want to separate from her Jewishness if she wants to be accepted.

The scene with the Guard at the train station allows Eva to show her growing confidence. At first she thinks that he might help her and then he becomes an annoyance. Her ability to stand up to his negative comments is reminiscent to the

defiance that she displayed when she jumped from the train. She lashes out at him when he declares that her parents won't come and adds that if they do come they will be interned as spies. Eva realizes that Germans are believed to be dangerous and that they don't belong in England. The guide shouts: "She should've stayed where she belongs" (66). Telling Eva that she doesn't belong solidifies the painful message of not belonging.

The Ratcatcher represents the underlying presence of evil and fear. For Eva, he is the personification of her inescapable past wrongs – she is the ungrateful one. As the bad child, she is responsible for the Holocaust and for her parent's suffering. For Eva, The Ratcatcher is a haunting reminder that she is being punished for being a bad child.

Der Rattenfanger is a 12th Century German folk tale about the town of Hameln and a mysterious rat catcher who uses his magical pipe to lure all of the children away from their families - never to be seen again (Altmann 200). The story has several different interpretations, each with varying reasons why the children were led away. The version that Helga reenacts tells of an ungrateful child that causes the Ratcatcher to take the happiness away from the town.

Eva is fond of the story because like many children, she likes to hear a spooky tale. On the night before her departure for England, Eva connects the ungrateful child as being herself. The story describes the place where the Ratcatcher leads the children away to as an abyss – which she conceives to be the unknown. For Eva the unknown is much more frightening than anything in reality. She doesn't know where she is going, where she will live and who will take care of her. She would

prefer to stay with her parents and face the dangers with them rather than be sent away into the abyss.

Eva's figment of the Ratcatcher's follows her as the cross-eyed boy on the train to England. He continues to feed her fears and causes her to worry that, like the Egyptians in the *Haggadah*, she will be led into the sea to drown. The uncertainty with getting the permits and being sent away again during the evacuation are opportunities for the Ratcatcher to return to punish Eva. At the end of Act I, Eva and Evelyn share the Ratcatcher nightmare: "He's coming" (45). I interpreted the text as actually describing what Eva feared was happening to her mother. When she says, "He's coming to get me. His eyes are sharp as razors," this was Eva's vision of the Nazi's coming to take her parents to the death camps. The fear of the unknown paralyzes Evelyn and keeps her from taking risks. She tells Helga, "Its hard for me" (84). In her final line, Eva confirms that she can't begin again.

Evelyn finally confronts the Ratcatcher with Helga at the end of the play. Both mother and daughter accuse each other of being the Ratcatcher – in essence, they have been forced to be each other's tormentor.

The name *Hitler* is only mentioned a few times in the play. Samuels is very careful to not over-use the references to the dictator. Rather than personify him, she alludes to Hitler as a symbol of evil and calamity. In Act I, Scene 1, once the train passes the border, Eva is finally able to swear and unleash her pent up anger toward Hitler: "Stuff you stupid Hitler" (20). The freedom to lash out at the cause of her pain is a cathartic moment for the character. I wanted to convey her passion through the

anger and show that she was a fighter. Act II, Scene 1, the postman mimics Hitler, which at first frightens Eva. Later he causes her to remember how terrified she was at seeing the frenzied reaction of the crowds to his motorcade. To convey Eva's fear, I tried to visualize a parade passing and being crushed by shouting people that towered over me, while also imagining the deafening sounds of crowds and sirens.

In Act II, Lil says to Evelyn, "Did I start the war? Am I Hitler?" (61). When Evelyn replies: "You might as well have been" Evelyn is saying that Lil is just as guilty of robbing her of her past as Hitler. It is an important moment in the play because we see the depth of Eva's resentment at being severed from her heritage.

The characters that do not appear in the play also play important symbolic rolls. In Act I, Eva asks Helga: "Why aren't Heinrich and Karla going on the trains?" (8). I imaged that they were Eva's cousins. The fact that they don't escape adds to Eva's later feelings of guilt for surviving. I projected Karla's character as Eva's imaginary friend and personified her in the doll. This gave me a real person to relate to when Eva delivers her monologs on the train and to show her need to take care of the doll.

We never meet Lil's real daughters, Margaret and Nora. I reasoned that they represented what Eva wanted to be – *real* English girls that had a place where they *belonged.* I contrasted Eva's real father, Vati, with her adopted father, Uncle Jack. Vati must have been very dignified and respected. It is important to Eva that her father gets his proper job back as the master of the bank when they come to England. She knows that the Nazi's have humiliated her father and she wants to see him return to his former self. Uncle Jack is undoubtedly a workingman – like Lil he

is down to earth. Eva must like him because she wants to stay with Lil and Uncle Jack rather than be evacuated. Eva's relationship to the play's unseen characters serves to clarify some of her important actions and reactions.

Costume designer Sherry Linnell creatively designed and fabricated costumes, which provided a means for me to distinguish Eva's evolution into Evelyn. This tool helped me mark the shifts in her character. In Act 1, Scene 1, Eva wears a blue dress, bedroom slippers and her hair is plated in two long braids. In this scene, she is comfortable and wants to hold on to what is familiar and reassuring. Both Eva and her mother wear their hair in braids – they are connected. Her German accent is quite heavy, and I used what I call my *head voice* to make Eva more childlike.

The coat is used to symbolize Eva's need to be self-sufficient and it is also symbolic of the journey she is about to take. Eva's resistance to sewing on the buttons is her way of communicating her reluctance to leave. Eva sees Helga's refusal to help her sew on the buttons as a rejection. She can't understand why her mother wants to push her little bird out of the nest. Helga's says, "You will miss the buttons when the wind blows" (4). This statement foreshadows the need for Eva to protect herself from the coming events.

After Eva gets on the train, she sees her mother desperately knocking on the window. Eva tries to communicate with her mother: "Why are you taking your gloves off? You're knocking too hard, your knuckles are going red" (17). Helga's removal of her gloves marks the first time that Eva sees the emotions that Helga has so successfully hidden. Eva struggles but can't unlock the window: "It's shut too tight!" (17). The window is a metaphor for the separation that the two women will

never resolve. At this point I wanted to show Eva's determination to be a good girl and that she could take care of herself. Eva's optimism and her tenacity are important features of her character.

Eva's character goes through a series of steps as she evolves from Eva into Evelyn. The evolution starts on the train when she is singing the German song and then changes the lyrics of the tune to English. When Lil comes for her she tries to hold on to her number, but it is taken from her and destroyed. Eva works hard to learn English so that she can get the permits for her parents. When Lil angrily confronts Eva for disobeying her by canvassing the neighborhood to find sponsors for her parents, Eva tries to defend herself by reverting to speaking German. She shouts at Lil that she is German and not English. Lil tells Eva, "Don't hide behind the German. It won't protect you" (37). This scene ends with Eva tearfully running off the stage fearing that she will lose everything – her heritage and her family if she does not get the permits.

Eva wears her same blue dress now that she is living in England. She has taken the coat off and is settling in to a new life, learning English and adapting to Lil's home. The blue dress and the letter to her mother show that Eva is still Helga's little girl. She is holding on to her German heritage and looking forward to being with her parents again.

The shoes also represent departure. At the train station Eva says, "I need to know the time" (25). Time indicates awareness. The watch relates to Eva's mother and what is familiar. The fact that it is locked away in the shoe frustrates Eva. Just like the locked train window, it is a barrier to her past. Later in the play Eva

personifies the watch as symbolic of her mother. The ticking is her mother's heart beat – it signifies to Eva that her mother is still alive. The heirlooms provide Eva with a means to connect to her parents. When she loses hope of ever seeing her family again, she wants to get rid of them and the painful memories that they evoke.

Eva changes to a pink dress in Act II. The hair is loosely styled and she no longer carries her doll. Both Lil and Eva wear the same shade of pink – they are connected now. I wanted to show that Eva had acquired new confidence and maturity by dropping my voice register and having a more grown up stance. At this point Eva has needed to mature. She carries a tremendous responsibility to get the permits for her parent. Eva is still wearing her Star of David necklace and struggling to read the Passover *Haggadah*. She wants to please Helga and prove that she is a good Jewish daughter.

In the following dream sequence, we see that even though Eva is back in her Hamburg home with Helga, she is not wearing her blue dress or her braids. The mother and daughter are together, but they are no longer connected. In this scene, I played a slightly more mature Eva who ask's her mother, "You're not going to die are you?" (47). Helga's response of "not yet", foreshadows that their relationship is going to change from being a tangible presence to a disconnected memory for Eva.

The more than she immerses herself in English, the harder it is for Eva to remember that she is German. When she reads her mother's letter encouraging her to celebrate the Seder and to read the *Haggadah,* Eva feels the pull between the two cultures that she is trying to balance.

During the evacuation scene at the Manchester train station, Eva wears a sweater and not the travelling coat. She stubbornly tells Lil that she can't take off her jewelry. Eva is still clinging to the hope that she will be reunited with her parents. Her decision to jump off the departing train shows Eva's independence and determination. She is a bit shocked by this newfound independence and questions Lil: "Have I been very bad?" (59). From this point on, Eva is not going to allow people and circumstances to take control of her own fate again.

Eva is wearing the same pink dress when she anxiously waits for her parents' arrival at the Manchester train station. She is still hopeful and optimistic. After she finally accepts that her parents are not coming, she removes her necklace and charm bracelet. She has lost her faith in her parents, her heritage, and her childish mannerisms. She affirms her intentions to become an English girl when she asks Lil: "How long can I stay with you?" This is Eva's emotional climax and the moment when she determines to reject everything that relates to her past so that she can reach her main objective, which is safety.

Later in Act II, Eva has become an adolescent English schoolgirl. I used an adult sounding voice and an English accent to show that Eva has taken a huge leap in the process of becoming Evelyn. Her pleated skirt and tucked in blouse reveal that she has a feminine figure. The saddle shoes are typical of the time. The scene features Lil helping Eva hem her skirt. This is significant because Lil is willing to do what Helga refused to do for Eva – help her to sew. Eva says that she wants to sell her gold jewelry. She doesn't listen to Lil's advice to keep them. Eva is now Lil's English daughter and no longer the little, foreign, German girl.

Language and costuming play an important role in this pivotal scene: Eva has lost most of the traces of her German accent. Her proper English and her determination to get rid of her German keepsakes solidify her intentions to let go of all connections to her past. It is only when she tells Lil that she can't stand the ticking of the watch that her German accent reappears.

In my final costume change, Eva is now seventeen. She wears a sophisticated blue suit, high heeled shoes, and her hair is styled into a ladylike chignon when she is reunited with Helga at a hotel. The costuming establishes that a considerable amount of time has lapsed since the two women were last together. Eva is now a grown woman and Helga is no longer the elegant and proud woman that was her former self. Her compliment regarding Eva's blue suit is meant to remind Eva of the last time they were together, but Eva doesn't respond to the statement. Helga wears the travelling coat now and not Eva.

Eva insists that Helga call her by her new name, Evelyn. This is a dramatic character shift for Eva because it marks the complete transformation from Eva to Evelyn. Helga asks Evelyn to bring back Eva but Evelyn can't. Eva is imprisoned in the attic, the window is sealed too tight and she has been locked away with the keepsakes. This marks the most tragic aspect of the play because both Eva and Helga are in love with a person that no longer exists. The Helga that Eva remembers died at Auschwitz and Eva died the moment that she stepped on to the train for England.

I began studying the German accent during the summer. Friederike von Schwerin-High, Pomona College German language professor, helped me with the

German phrasing, pronunciations, and recorded the German text for me to study. I worked with a dialect coach, listened to German dialect tapes and watched several movies where the actors spoke with a German accent. Additionally, Lina Edwards, an 88-year old Kinder that I interviewed was kind enough to tape the German dialogs that my character must speak at the beginning of the play. I utilized all of these resources because it was very important that the audience could believe that German was my first language.

The most challenging aspect of the German accent is that the sounds are made in the throat – I had to develop my muscles and vocal cords so that I would not lose my voice. The tongue placement for German is quite different than English as well. The German tongue is heavy (bee stung) and rests at the bottom of the mouth. The transition from German to English dialect was challenging because English is spoken with the tip of the tongue in a forward placement in the mouth.

As Eva ages, I made an effort to change the tone and resonance of my voice by lowering my range. Pomona Theatre Department voice professor, Margaret Kemp provided the essential voice training and coaching that made it possible for me to develop my voice.

The accent training was especially tricky for me because of being dyslexic. I don't really hear the subtleties of language. My one regret was that I did not have enough time to thoroughly perfect the English accent.

Learning the harmonica presented similar difficulties because I didn't have any musical training. A harmonica teacher helped me find a German tune to play and showed me how to use my mouth so that I could try to play each note. I can't say

that I ever really mastered the harmonica, but this experience gave me a newfound respect for harmonica musicians. It actually requires a lot of skill to play the instrument well.

The music and language training was difficult but also extremely beneficial and I am grateful that I had the opportunity go through the process of developing new skills. Going forward, I will be less intimidated if I am required to learn new skills for a role.

Eva's physicality needed to be authentic for the audience to believe that I was a child. In actuality, I was the oldest member of the cast and very close in size to many of the other female characters. I began by observing children at play in the park – I practiced walking around like I thought a child would move, but I quickly realized that I was imitating a child rather than actually moving as a child does. Pomona College Theater Professor, Tom Leabhart, advised me to change focus and showed how to move my body in a more authentically childlike way. He suggested that I work on remembering what I was like when I was little. It occurred to me that children are like puppies – they have a freedom and impulsivity in their movements. They don't sit with their legs together, sit up straight or measure their reactions. I spent the first several weeks of rehearsal trying to unlearn what I had spent 22-years of my life becoming. I had to think about unlocking my knees when walking and changing levels with the energy and flexibility of a child. It was an interesting process that I actually found to be a lot of fun.

I liked the intimate setting of the Allen Theatre because it allowed the audience to be active spectators. The "V" shaped, raked stage presented a challenge

for me to find a way to position my body so that I could relate to the other actors and still be seen by the audience. I don't believe that I ever quite mastered the ability to turn and pivot on stage in a natural way. The raked stage provided the maximum amount of viewing angles for most of the audience yet the fact that Eva spends a lot of time sitting on the ground made it difficult for me to get up and down on the incline. The small stage also made the acting space a bit crowded when several characters were together in a scene.

The blown out windows were a nice scenic feature that supported the idea that Eva was hiding in the attic. The sparse use of furniture worked well because it eliminated the need for scene changes and allowed the play to move seamlessly between the present and the past. The minimal use of props meant that I had to use my imagination to ground myself in the scene. Moreover I put greater emphasis on the few props that I did have such as the doll, suitcase, letter, and photo of my parents to make them especially significant.

It would have been great to have an actual train seat and a window so I wouldn't have needed to mime them, but Jeff Polunas' sound and video designs supported the action and facilitated the beat shifts. The shrill train whistles, metallic wheels, engine grinding, and Eva's reactions to them, were essential to the fabric of the play. Monique Saigal attended a cast meeting and shared with us that the most jarring aspects of the play were the sounds of the train, the police whistle and the sirens because they produced disturbing imagines of her childhood that she can never forget.

Christina Munich's lighting design focused attention between scene changes, as did the sound effect. The unique use of light coming through the stage floor created the surrealistic effects for the dream scenes and established dramatic tension that supported the play.

I appreciated the wealth of material that I could access through Eva's physicality, language, costuming, and stage elements as a means to build her character and to convey both her vulnerability and strength.

The work process that I am most proud of came from the vocal diversity that I tried to develop. During the last four years of acting study, I have worked earnestly to discover and deepen my vocal range and power. Although my German accent was not always as consistent as I would have liked, on the whole I believe that it was acceptable and that the audience could hear me. Regrettably, I was not as confident with the English accent and I would have liked it to have been more specific.

Last summer I participated in the Rachel Rosenthal, *Doing By Doing Experience.* It was a tremendous opportunity to work with an iconic and inspirational performance artist. During the course of the three-day intensive workshop, Rachel made the assessment of my work by saying: "Sometimes you hit the nail on the head and sometimes you just miss the nail." I am still learning how to keep my performance level consistent for every show. During our run, I felt that a scene might have worked better, or not as well at the previous performance. My goal is to be able to deliver the same intensity and focus each night. Rachel also said that my voice is strong but not always specific to the objective. I was determined to

apply her advice to my voice work and I believe that I made some good progress in this area. Being a part of the *Kindertransport* show was a wonderful learning experience and I am so grateful that I was given the freedom to experiment with different processes and the chance to learn by doing.

This production was a terrific opportunity and definitely one of my favorite college adventures. From camping at Halona and our group "Kinder huddles" before every show, it has really been an amazing time and we could not have done this without the outstanding leadership provided by Professor Betty Bernhard. I will always remain enormously grateful for the faith that Miss Betty showed in me, and for her willingness to let me take on this challenge.

Background Information on Diane Samuels and *Kindertransport* Play Reviews:

Diane Samuels was born in Liverpool, in 1960. Before devoting herself to writing full time, she worked as a high school drama teacher and writer-in-residence at the Theatre Center youth theatre. The Verity Bargate Award, a nationwide play writing competition, was established in 1981, in memory of the founder of the non-profit Soho Theatre Company. This organization was established by Bargate to encourage production and support of new plays. As the 1992 Verity Bargate Award winner, Samuels' play received a full-professional production run from April 13 – May 8, 1993 at the Cockpit Theatre in London where the work received overwhelmingly positive reviews.

The inspiration for Samuels' play began when a friend shared the story of her father's evacuation from Germany in 1938 as a part of the Kindertransport. The author became intrigued by how the father's struggle to come to terms with the trauma had affected his daughter. "Her feelings made me think about how the next generation inherit their parent's guilt. I became interested too in the idea of surviving trauma – what is healthy, what isn't, and if life can be good again" (Brown 1). As Samuels' interviewed other Kinder she began to condense their true-life histories to form the storyline for her play. Samuels explained that the process of talking to Kinder about their experiences affected her emotionally. "It was a matter of reading stuff and talking to people and then putting it away and working out what you want to say. I think that if you get to the heart of something you make up things and then they turn out to be true" (Bayley 1). Many of the Kinder that have seen the play remarked that the play vividly paralleled their personal experiences. Edward

Mendelsohn explained: "In the play, the little-girl's mother conceals some jewelry and a watch in the heel of a shoe, because it was illegal to take valuables out of the country. My own mother hid her engagement ring in my shoe" (Bayley 1). The play's drama draws its poignancy from the real life situations and heart wrenching emotions that the children and their families experienced.

According to Samuels, the play's overarching theme is one of separation: "The piece is about separation. It's about parents separating from children, but it's bigger than just separation within the family, it's about separation from one's ancestry" (Bayley 1). Samuels dramatizes this theme with three generations of women by interweaving the past and present and exploring the conflicting reality that to survive, Eva chooses to suppress her identity. The driving force of the play is power of the mother-daughter relationships between Eva and Helga, Eva and Lil and finally Evelyn and Faith.

Claire Bayley, theatre critic for the London, *Evening Standard* wrote about the *Kindertransport* 1993 opening night performance: "Diane is well practiced in the art of making theatre from a combination of research, improvisation and imaginative input...her eye for realistic detail remains uncannily keen (Bayley 2).

Georgiana Brown of London's, *Independent* found the focus on the female relationships to be especially well conceived:

> An intricately constructed piece linking three generations of women, playwright Samuels splices past with present to explore notions of identity, survival, the mother-daughter relationship and the price of love. (Brown 1)

Theatre critic Paul Taylor, also of the, *Independent,* applauded the play's artistic director in the *Weekend Arts* page on, April 17, 1993: "The play is brought to

piercing life by Abigail Morris's excellent cast...the intricate geometry of the scenes here is as impressive as the directness of its emotional impact" (Taylor 1). Taylor positively cited Sarah Shanson for her performance as Eva:

> Shanson, who is only 13, gives an amazing performance, getting right inside the character's complicated psychology as she shifts by stages from the disorientated infant still hopeful of a family reunion to a determinedly English 16-year old who has willed herself to be unaffected by death camp footage. (Taylor 1)

The venerable London publication, *The Times,* featured a review written by Jeremy Kingston, that lauded Samuels' writing: "The accomplished writing is characterized by sequences of rapid, single-sentence exchanges that edge away from strict realism." He went on to describe Abigail Morris' direction as, "a smoothly flowing production." Additionally, Kingston's review highlighted the key members of the cast's performances:

> Elizabeth Bell's heady performance establishes Eva/Evelyn's neurotic guilt and propensity to panic, while 13-year-Sarah Shanson gives a performance of poignant clarity as the child who must deaden her heart. Suzan Sylvester's hurt, puzzled Faith shows the tug between daughterly love and ancestral voices. (Kingston 1)

The reviewer ended his piece with the line, "All in all, this is a concerned and thought-provoking evening." The London premier run of Samuels' *Kindertransport,* proved to be exceptionally well received by critics and audiences as was evidenced in the bulk of the London theatre reviews. Two years later *Kindertransport* was presented on the American stage.

The play received its off-Broadway debut at the Manhattan Theatre Club in May of 1994. Abigail Morris, Soho Theater artistic director, continued as the production's director for the New York run. Jeremy Gerard wrote a review in

Variety complimenting the play and the cast: "The Manhattan Theatre Club concludes its 23rd season with a compelling, if imperfect, play featuring three utterly haunting performances – precisely the kind of production that has helped earn this company its well-deserved stature" (Gerard 1). The reviewer added:

> The play works dreamily, harrowingly to the climactic confrontation between mother and daughter, and it's made unforgettable by these two actresses: Dana Ivey (Evelyn), a master of playing emotion so repressed it seems to have distorted her facial bones, and Jane Kaczmarek (Helga), who portrays pain so subtly you're hardly aware the performance is ripping you apart. Add to that the touching work of young Alanna Ubach (Eva), in a performance drenched in equal portions of sadness and optimism, and you have an experience not easily forgotten. (Gerard 1)

The *Variety* review affirmed that the play *Kindertransport* had a wide appeal and meaning for a worldwide audience.

Two years after the New York premier, *Kindertransport* was successfully staged for West Coast audiences, first in San Francisco and then Hollywood. On January 19, 1996, Steven Winn's review in the *San Francisco Chronicle* called the Marin Theatre Company's production "flawed but moving drama" (Winn 1). The reviewer found the play's staging and set design to be particularly effective:

> Director Lee Sankowich's sensitive production unfolds in a haunting stage environment designed by Giulio Cesare Perrone and lit with a symphonic play of colors and angles by Kurt Landisman. The space, which conflates the Hamburg home of Eva's family with the London storeroom of the house she occupies as an adult...the emptiness of the scene is what's most powerful. Three exposed brick arches invoke the concentration camp ovens Evelyn has tried her best to banish from her mind. (Winn 1)

The *Chronicle* theatre critic agreed with other London press reviews in his unfavorable opinion of the play's dialog and Samuels' choice of using a lone male actor to portray several sinister characters. He wrote:

> *Kindertransport* is not the most elegantly structured drama. The dialogue sometimes runs too generic (Don't you think this affects me? Faith asks her mother). Samuels uses the lone male actor –Paul Finocchiaro as a Nazi border patrolman, a taunting English postman and other small parts in predictable fashion. (Winn 1)

The *San Francisco Chronicle* piece ends with a positive assessment of the overall play:

> *Kindertransport* penetrates one woman's experience of the Holocaust to discover the inexhaustible power of the century's nightmare. Sankowich's production, which recalls the graceful work he did on the Holocaust play 'A Shayna Maidel' a few seasons back, is an eloquent testament in its own right. (Winn 1)

Following the San Francisco staging, *Kindertransport* opened in the spring for Los Angeles area audiences.

Lisa D. Horowitz's review for *Daily Variety* written on, April 23, 1996, described the West Hollywood Tiffany Theatre production as: "A moving and thought provoking play" (Horowitz 1). She went on to say:

> Samuels' play, although it suffers from odd structural choices and occasional obviousness, is quite effective. One feels that the story of the Kindertransport has not been fully told, but this is an excellent attempt to bring it to light. (Horowitz 1)

This reviewer found Director, Deborah Lavine's work to be highly melodramatic:

> The overwrought confrontations seem greatly at odds with the restrained English nature of the women, particularly Lil and Evelyn. Only at the end, when Evelyn finally faces her fears, does her extreme emotional outburst seem appropriate. (Horowitz 1)

The *Daily Variety* piece concluded by saying that the cast's performances were generally fine especially Holland Taylor as Evelyn and Kala Savage as Eva:

> Savage, a high school senior making her professional debut, shows great promise and versatility. Taylor, at the emotional center of the drama, is touching as a woman whose carefully constructed façade is crumbling. Her stiff upper lip trembles, revealing the turmoil within. (Horowitz 1)

The West Coast *Kindertransport* productions concluded the professional staging of the play until four years later, when it was again produced for American audiences in St. Petersburg, Florida, Quincy, Massachusetts and Oklahoma City. It was subsequently produced around the world – including Japan, Germany, South Africa and Canada. In 2009, the play received a U.K. revival with community theatre staging's in Liverpool and Staffordshire England.

Diane Samuels currently lives in North London with her husband, Simon Garfield, an author and journalist, and their two sons. She continues to write plays and book reviews for the *Guardian* newspaper.

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Interview with Mr. Ralph Samuel –June 20, 2012

"There are 10,000 stories... mine is just one of them." Ralph Samuel

Ralph Samuel was born in Dresden, Germany in 1931. He stated that he was an only child for "political reasons" which he explained meant that his parents made a conscious decision to have only one-child because of the difficult situation for Jews in Germany at the time. He added that many Jews that were not Orthodox also made the decision to limit their families because of the German discrimination. Samuel's family lived in his Grandmother's home and then later in an apartment in Dresden. He commented that many of the Kinder came from the larger cities because the Jewish community was better informed in the larger cities than they were in the smaller villages and towns.

In 1938, at the age of seven, Samuel traveled to London by airplane. He was one of the very few Kinder that arrived by air. He remembered being the only child on the plane and still recalls walking down the steps of the plane by himself. Around his neck was a cardboard sign that read: *Ralph Samuel for Mr. Epstein.* Mr. Samuel remarked: "I was a package, not a person...all of the Kinder were packages."

Samuel stated that most of the parents that sent children recognized that they would most probably never see their children again: "Parents never told the kids this – but they knew that more than likely that would be the case even though they told the kids that they would see them in just a few months." He remembers hearing that the trip was an adventure and that he would have a grand time. His parents never told him that people in England spoke English – a fact that Samuel remarked was probably the biggest shock to him when he arrived: "At seven-years of age, I didn't know a word of English!"

The Epstein family was Samuel's sponsor: "They had to put together the 50-pounds to get a child. It was a considerable amount of money in those days. Mr. Epstein had a son whose name was Peter Ralph Epstein. That is why they chose me from the list, because my name was the same as his son's middle name." The Epstein's took him to their home in Wimbledon, England where he was raised as a member of their family.

In January of 1939, Samuel's mother wrote to Mr. Epstein that conditions were very bad in Germany and asked if he might hire her as a maid. After a few months his mother arrived at the Epstein home and worked as a domestic servant. Samuel remarked that at the time he didn't think it was strange that he was treated as a family member while his mother was a maid: "I ate at the table in the dining room and my Mother ate in the kitchen. I was just a little kid so I didn't think much of it then."

After England declared war on Germany, Samuel was evacuated to a manor house in Guilford – a market town about one-hour south of London. Samuel stated: "There were seven other children living in at the manor house and I was the only Jew. My mother was hired as the governess for us kids.

When the war ended in 1945, Samuel was fourteen-years old. His mother got a job in Guilford, England and made a life for them there. Samuel related what had become of his father: "He was first taken to a Jew House and from there he was sent to a Dresden work camp. He finally was sent to Auschwitz where they murdered him."

At the age of twenty-seven, Samuel immigrated to the U.S. He first settled in New Jersey: "I hated New Jersey – I couldn't find a job there. I had been educated at the University of London – had a degree in Real Estate and Land Economics but I couldn't get a job. I moved to Washington DC where I got a good job that I loved." The job ended after three-years and he drove cross-country to California: "I drove out on the Route 66 – just like the song. I had planned to go to L.A. but when I arrived at Mojave, I decided to turn right instead of left and went to San Francisco."

After retiring in 2000, Samuel began to tell his Kinder story to groups in the United States and in Germany; "I had to learn to speak German again. My mother used to speak German to me but I would always respond to her in English. I wouldn't speak German."

When asked how he felt about visiting Germany, he remarked that he felt very comfortable there: "I think that Germany is coming to terms with its role in the Holocaust. You can't go two-blocks in Berlin without being reminded of the Holocaust. They have a program called, 'Stumble Stones' where 4X4 inch brass plaques are placed in front of homes where Jews used to live." Samuels plans to purchase a plaque to go in front of his Grandmother's home in Dresden: " I want to place a plaque for my father and for my Grandmother who both died in the concentration camps."

When asked the question, "Looking back, what do you think that current generations should know about the Kindertransport – Samuel responded: "One person makes a difference. One person saved my life – an ordinary middle-class Jew made a difference. Because of him, I lived. Because of him my two daughters were born and because of him, I have two grand children. One person can always make a difference."

July 5, 2012
Interview with Holocaust Survivor Elisabeth Mann

In Hungary
When the war stared I was 13 and that was 1939.
I'll tell you, that it is hard to answer because were so much Hungarian so assimilated. I don't know if you know what that word means. That we didn't think about that - we were not Hungarian in any other way than our religion was different. We didn't think of ourselves as any other way. But for us it didn't make any difference if some people did go to the Catholic Church or to Jewish Temple somehow we didn't make to distinguish between the two. You did what you believed in it and that was it for the rest of their lives. In every way and every shape was the same. We went to the same school, and I looked like the other girls and so on, it was the same so that was my life before the war. One of the people.
Yes, I had two brothers and one sister. My father was a businessman and combination because we had some piece of land but also my father took care of that caretaker and the land and we were growing wheat things like that but that was not the main core of it -- and then my father was a businessman. Let's put it that way.

My life changed completely when the war started. Difficult question the war started and slowly the anti-Semitism started in the country too. The influence of hatred is unbelievable. Most horrible poison on earth. The hatred and that's one of my greatest goal in life to try to explain to people and somehow change it. See the people what hatred does and what an unbelievable thing and what an unnecessary thing it is in human life. That's what I can tell you but when the war started hatred spreading people and that influenced our life.

Later that made it impossible for Jewish people to work. A couple of years later when the war -- because the war started in 1939 and to 1945, and during that time slowly everything was going down hill for the Jewish people. We couldn't work and after a few years' doctors, lawyers, shop makers it didn't make any difference what trade you had you couldn't work. You couldn't go to high school so they hindered you in every possible way to get ahead and the situation was very, very difficult. Because you had no way to earn money. You had no way to support yourself. In Hungary they did not know about social help any organization and especially wouldn't apply to any Jew. To get any help from anyone.
We managed what we had and a tried to our very best and all that mainly my parent. Jobs we shared everything that we possibly had. And sold whatever that could. So we managed somehow, yes.

You see this question is very normal and I understand because you can not hear a story about somebody's life if you don't ask all the main details of the life story but some for me getting very, very hard. Cause all the pain. I understand you. I don't want to scare you. I just explaining to you that, that this not so easy for me to answer all of your questions but I try. First of all I wanted to tell you that even though we had very little by year-by-year when the war was progressing the war you know the

w-a-r. And the more and more people Jewish people were coming from different villages because they had no means to live at all so they were begging for help and a that was my mother's motto that you don't ever have so little that you can not share. So even that what we had always shared with the people the people that were coming. Of course. So that the same for the whole country actually But we did have each other and in that horrible situation.

What was next question? You asked me about my family and actually would you be kind and repeat the question?
The peak of the war. First of all, I had an older brother who was drafted in to he Hungarian army as a Hungarian solder. What was normal but the way they handled him was not normal. That was very cruel and many of the Hungarian solders. Christians who were with him together and previously even school mates and very good friends but on the front line he was sent to the Russian front to fight for Hungry and for Germany because Hungry had the same King 1914 when the first world war started till the end of the Second I mean the end of the war so everything the Hungarians had to do what the Germans ordered. And in 1940 in 1939 when the war stared Hitler declared also unknowns to the Hungarians people that you and I we are allies. You know what allies me? Okay but that meant that German army and dozens and dozens of German solders could come and into Hungry to crisscross the country depending which country Hitler wanted to invade. What surrounded Hungary. Hungary is the middle of central Europe and surrounded by many, many small countries. And Hitler planned to invade these countries and he did. So criss-crossing Hungry that was the easiest and shortest way for him to reach his goal. So that also made Hungary in a difficult situation and the hatred from these sources so spread. And these solders going with Hungarian girls came into Hungary and were talking about hatred and so on. Anyway my brother was sent to the Hungarian army to the Russian front to fight. But these two countries Hungry and Germany and the 1944 and when Hitler was very successful with his war and going from one country to the next one and occupied all of them and I am sure you know these countries: Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Bulgaria, Romanian and Greece. I don't even have to tell you all of that and the Russians by 1944, his luck changed and the Russians pushing him back to Germany and then he came back through Budapest he was going there too and Hitler had a fresh supply of German solders to Budapest and he announced to the Hungarian people -- forget about Allies now we occupy your country. When that happened hell fell on the Jewish people in Hungry. And then I can answer you what happened to my family.

We had to go to the ghettos and before that happened my sister worked for a Christian company in my city as a buyer and she was sent to Budapest for a business errand. March 22, 1944, three-days later as the Germany occupancy started in Hungary when she and I boarded the train to Budapest two German SS took her off from the train and disappeared. And my parents were desperately looking for her trying to find out what happened but they ever did find her. And did oh. She never returned home again.

So my mother became very, very ill so that was happening and my brother was in the front. My sister disappeared and every single day something new so called Jewish laws came into effect in Hungary besides that we donated our radio, type writer anything was of value to us to the Germans they were taking whatever they could from your homes because they had been visiting your homes uninvited naturally. Taking your paintings, carpet whatever, whatever you had.

Then every single day in different Jewish homes, two German SS arrived and asking for the father of the home. They were beaten half dead to make a confession where are the fortune of the Jews? We had no fortune ever. That exact time we hardly anything to eat. But that was no reason to stop the beating many times they took the people to headquarters and naturally never returned home again.
But they came to my house I opened the door two German SS will full berets, with guns, pistol and all the decoration as I stood there looking at me and telling me we came for your father. I told them they already took him away. They did not believe me just looking and repeated it again and again. I did repeat also that they had already taken him away. After awhile we stood there just looking at each other finally they turned around and left and when I stepped into our house I collapsed. When at the other door about two or three yards away from the front door I was hiding my father. My father couldn't go to the backyard anymore because if one our neighbors would have seen him they would have called the Germans officer and they would have come and take him away. That's the way and they never knowing what moment they might come back or get the orders.

Then came the law every Jew has to go to the ghettos. And will small and big and baby just came from the hospital old, young and everyone. And they told us fifteen people to every home. But owned by a Jew in the middle of the ghetto these homes are built almost 200 years ago they had no living room or dining area in all just two little rooms and a kitchen and an out house in the back yard. In Hungary every single back yard is fenced around and you have a gate and with a key you can and get out with it. So the second you are in somebody's backyard you are a prisoner you can't go anywhere. So they told us that we were going there, fifty people to each one of these houses, which were not close by each other and quite a distance from our block. They informed nicely that we can take everything from our home, whatever we want to take with us what we can carry in our two hands. What can you carry in your two hands? And what shall you carry in your two hands? Shall you take care of your babies or small children or maybe your sick mother? Or shall you have a blanket, a loaf of bread or some food or what? What can you take with you? And then they said the most important rule which was and that was said naturally with the solders with the gun on their shoulders that you leave your front house door, (Pause) you just walk away. And that's what we did. And naturally, we never, ever returned home again. I was never allowed to go back.

Then in the ghettos there was no place for the people. Most of the people they all resided in the back yard or the plains around. Two SS men came every single day and expecting us and looking us over -telling us stories and we didn't know how

long we would be there and after weeks and weeks many people suicided when the SS men left but after weeks and weeks finally they told us they would take us – relocate. You know what relocate means? Put you in a different place. They said that you will have plenty of space and you will be together with your family just hurry up and that's what we did. We walked to the railroad station, the sick, the babies, the small children, the grown ups, the old, the young. We did go on the streets. The sidewalk was full Hungarian people looking at us like we were the circus. Some people from us asked for water because they were – because it was the beginning of May it was hot – but nobody gave us a drop of water.

When we came to the railroad station there was cattle car waiting for us. The cattle cars had no benches, no windows, no blankets, nothing just a big wood frame of the cattle cars but in side and 100 hundred people had to climb up to each cattle car. We were sitting on the floor on a block, touching each other then they shut the door. It was dark inside. All of the babies were screaming and crying and all the little children were scared to death. All the sick people were begging for medication and water and we had no water we had no food. We had no sanitary facilities and that's the way we travelled and we didn't know where and how long. After two days - all the babies died and the sick people and they were staying with us and that's the way were traveled - and a I looked at the people's head as I was also sitting on the floor (pause) the anxiousness and the atmosphere was unbelievable, the heat, the stench. Indescribable - and I talked to myself, "My God - hell can not be so horrible! Than that cattle car ride."

So after four and a half days the cattle cars finally stopped and I was very happy because I didn't hear anymore the wheel hitting the rail and the screaming of the people – everybody was sick some people had gone crazy – bagging the sides of the cattle car screaming. Screaming I want to get out – I don't want to go anywhere. And slowly the cattle car – that door started to open up and my happiness flew away because as I looked out it was pitch dark. I saw just flame torches everywhere and next to the car was standing two German SS looking at us. I felt like butcher knives cutting into me. Next to him was standing German Sheppard with two bulging eyes looking at us with a tremendous tongue hanging out of his big mouth between very sharp teeth and his body looked like a burglar balloon going up and shaking tremendously that was terrifying. I didn't know – just later – much, much later that these dogs were trained to jump on you if the SS ordered them and took you apart. The second side stranded two SS men. (Deep sigh) in white and blue striped uniforms they were the so-called, special unique chosen by the SS men. You know the SS men are the German solders that trained for one reason – to kill. And these people were standing there and they were forbidden to talk to us. Not to answer any questions. The only thing they repeated again and again – jump. I don't know if you sat on your legs for four and one half days – I couldn't even move and till today I still can't remember how did I came off from the train and how did my father manage to do that.

We two took my mother and little brother off from the train and I was desperately holding my mother and little brother's hand and my father was holding from the side together so that we should not be pushed apart because all the people had to come off from the train. Everybody was screaming and crying for each other. Everybody to stay together but it was a terrifying night. Pitch dark just the flames surrounded the place and the German Sheppard's where ever you looked and German SS and the noise was unbearable and when everybody was off from the train the loud speaker came on and told us to separate. The men should form one group - woman and children should form another group. And unfortunately – my little brother turned to me and asked me where do I belong – to the man or to the woman? And because he was so sick during the four and a half days travel, I told him to go with my mother because mothers are the people who take care of sick children. You see I didn't know that with my advice I killed my brother – because all the mothers and all the children are taken to the gas chambers right away (voice breaking – pause).
I didn't know that – but I could never ever forgive myself.

As I was standing there with my mother and little brother I looked too at my father. My father – who was a six foot two inch very strong man. He always knew what to do in any situation before, but now as I looked at him he looked so miserable and the tears were covering his whole face. I never saw my father like that before.
So I didn't think a second where I was, I didn't even know where I was. I stared to run to him. I wanted to comfort him. I wanted to tell him something I don't what maybe I just wanted to hug him. But as I was half way through to him an SS man stepped forward and screamed at me stop and with a rubber stick that they was always carrying with them -- he started to beat me and screamed at me go back where you belong. I started to talk to him, I said please let me go to my father just for one minute – half a minute – not for a second. He got very angry and never ever stopped the beating and I had the blood running all over my face and my back and he was screaming you will be together with you father tomorrow morning. I don't know how long I was standing there. I couldn't move. I just received all the beating. Finally I realized I had no choice (sigh) I turned around and gone back to where my mother and little brother stood before and they were nowhere. They disappeared.

And then the loud speakers order us that all of the single woman come forward make a third group and walk for a while. And that we did and there was a young SS man standing there waving left and right with his hands. I didn't know who that person was when I came face-to-face with him. He was smiling at me. Left meant you are going directly to the gas chamber, right meant you are saved at long as you are capable to work and for German Reich and if you are no good for working anymore you will be sent the gas chambers or you will be shot on the spot or you just drop dead from hunger, from beating, from the atrocities what they were doing to you. But we did not know anything about it. That solder was then Doctor Josef Mengele. They had all the medical group in Auschwitz the inmates called him the Angel of death. And that's exactly who he was.

When we came to the right wall (cough) they ordered us take off all clothes and then they shaved our body and head and threw at us some rags. I got a man's shirt. It was about eleven o'clock at night. Very, very cold. I was trying to cover myself to reason first I was so ashamed of myself - I was naked. The shirt had no buttons. I couldn't cover myself - besides I was very, very cold. I looked around, everybody was bald I didn't realize I looked the same way. As we stood I remember there was a tremendous bond fire shaped like a Christmas tree (sign). Looked at us, little babies faces looked back at us. In pain – little arms and legs hanging out and the girls started to scream around me – look they are burning us alive. And that was the first time that we realized that the horrible stench in the air was the burning human flesh.

Then came an SS man and ordered us to run and we had to jump over burning human bodies and the girls started to scream there are all our parents and the SS men were laughing. And with their rubber stick he was pointing to the sky -- look up what do you see -- and saw big heavy black smoke covering the sky. He said there are your parents and that's were you are going. The only way out of here is through the chimney. And he turned around laughing.
That was arrival to Auschwitz.

Then the ice-cold rain stared to fall and us girls stood there almost naked screaming and crying. That was one night that I will never ever, cannot forget. That is my story – how I came to concentration camp.

It is unbelievable what one person can do to another one and act accordingly to teach the people to be kind to each other and my opinion -- hatred has no place on earth. I cannot understand what hatred is. I was in concentration camp and I did not hate anyone. I never wanted to revenge anyone they killed my whole family. I am the only one who survived. My sister, my two brothers, my parents were killed and the grandmother, and so on, but I never wanted to kill anyone. I never wanted to revenge any, any hatred or whatever they done to me because I don't believe in it. I believe in love. I believe in understanding and I believe no matter what color you are -- if you are yellow or green or red or whatever -- we are all the human beings and would be loved we would like to be loved and not hated. And that's what I believe when you talk to a person -- instead of threatening a person then you could even be friends with anyone. So that's my theory --and not see any other way.


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Berned
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KINDERTRANSPORT

EVA

(I,1) (II,1)

ROXANNE

KINDERTRANSPORT

EVA & HELG.
(I, 1)

KINDERTRANSPORT

EVA

(II, 1)

KINDERTRANSPORT

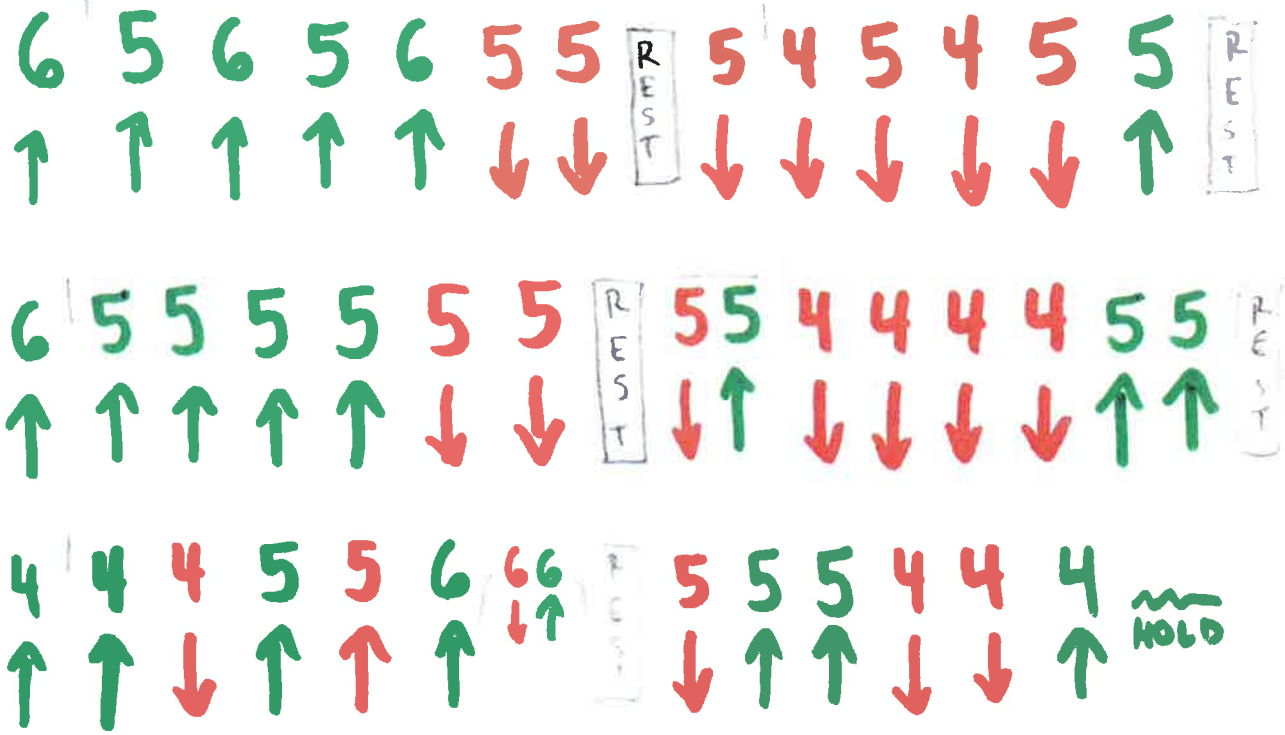
EVA

(II, 1)

KINDERTRANSPORT

EVA
(II, 1)

DER KUCKUCK UND DER ESEL



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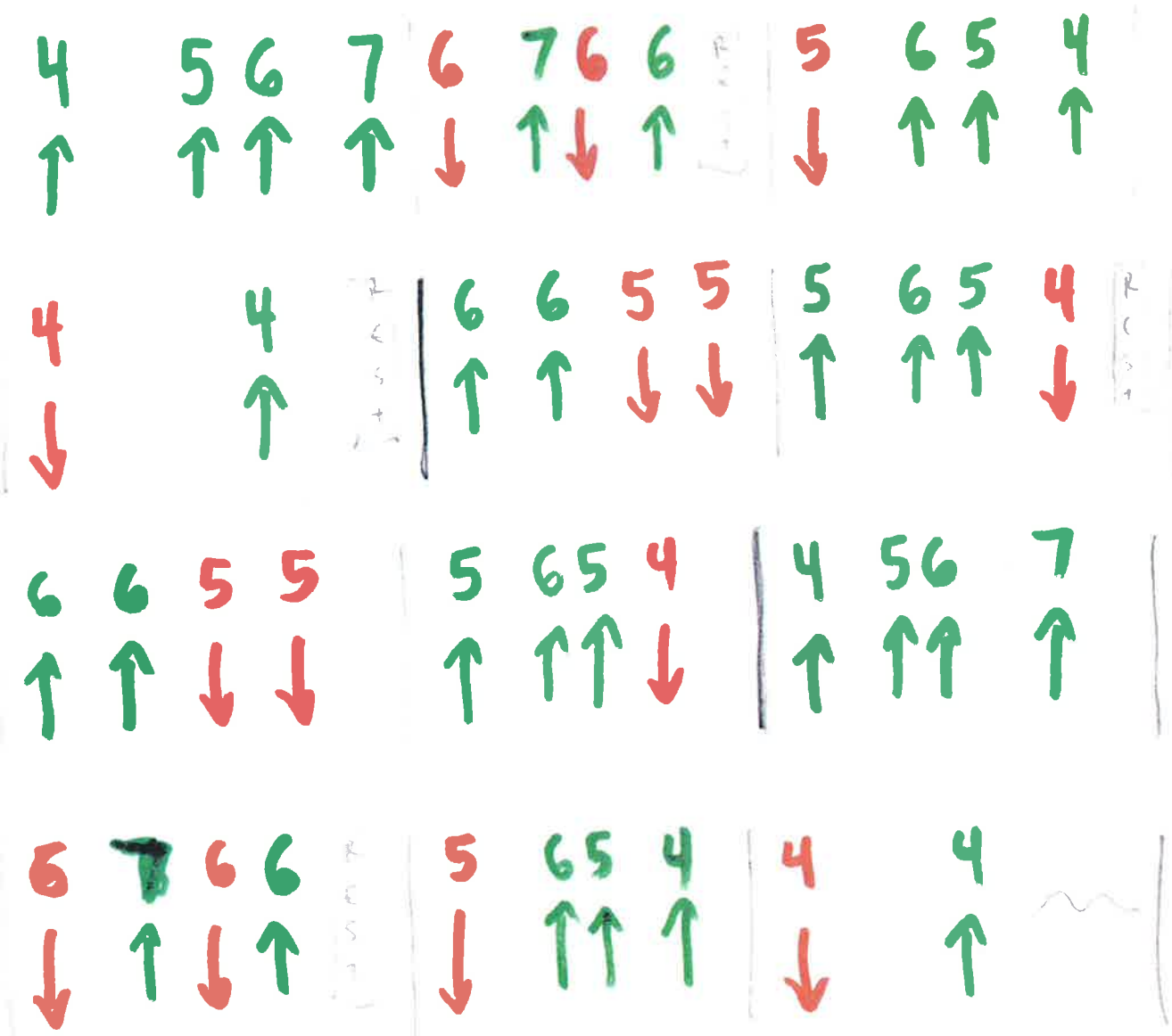


Act II Scene 2 Seat Beats and Character Motivation

England anticipating the German invasion after the war broke out, put into motion a children's evacuation effort with the code name *Pied Piper.* Thousands of English children and Kinder were sent out of the cities to the countryside to get them out of harms way.

Diane Samuels used the evacuation event to dramatize Eva's deep-seated fears of being sent away again. In Act II, Scene 2, Eva and Lil are at the train station waiting with the other children to be evacuated to the country. Listed below is an example of how I marked this scene for beats and justified Eva's character motivation, objectives and tactics:

Beat One:
Eva. Will you visit me? To get confirmation

Lil. I said, didn't I.

Eva. And will you tell Mutti and Vati how to find me when they come? To make sure that what happened in Germany won't happen in England. I need to know that my parents will come for me.

Lil. What did I say, Eva. Don't you trust me?

Eva. I have to be sure. Will you keep your promises?

Beat Two:
Lil. Have you got everything?

Eva. Teacher's already checked me. I don't want Lil to check me – if she thinks that I have everything then I will have to go.

Lil. Let me check you again.

Eva. Why?

Lil. Why'd you think? To be sure. What you got?

Eva. Bag. Scene is painfully reminiscent of Helga and Ava's packing preparations for the trip to England. Eva is aware that she is being pushed into the unknown and is reluctant to comply.

Lil. Just one?

Eva. Yes.

Lil. Gas mask?

Eva. Yes.

Lil. Sandwiches?

Eva. Yes. Stop interrogating me.

Beat Three
Lil. You're not wearing that jewelry are you?

Eva. I have to. The jewelry is my "super protector."

Lil. Anything could happen to it.

Eva. I'm not taking it off. The jewelry represents my faith that my parents will come for me.

Beat Four
Train whistle blows – Eva sees the Ratcatcher

Lil. Better get a move on.

Ava. Why do I have to go now? There's no war. I don't understand why must I go.

Lil. It could start any time. All the children's going. We can tie it to your buttonhole.

Ava. Mummy Miller…

Lil. Where shall we put it then?

Eva. I saw someone on the platform. To explain to Lil that the Ratcatcher has come for me.

Lil. Who?

Eva. He's coming to get me. Fears that the Ratcatcher has come to punish me.

Lil. Who is?

Eva. He's waiting in the shadows. He will get me if you leave me alone.

Lil. There's no one there.

Eva. Don't make me go. Protect me.

Lil. Nora and Margaret's going with their classes aren't they? It's not just you being evacuated. All the children have got to go. You'll be a heck of a lot safer out of the city. Keep still now. I can't get a grip.

Eva. Let me go tomorrow. Put off going.

Lil. I said. There could be war any day. D'you want to be bombed to bits, gassed till you chock?

Eva. I might never come back. Pleading to stay.

Lil. It's my job to care about what happens to you, even if you don't.

Eva. But... Need to justify why I must stay. I won't be safe if I leave.

Lil. No buts. I want you safe and out of it.

Eva. But what about you and Uncle Jack? You won't be safe here.

Lil. Don't you worry about us.

Eva. But I do. You are all that I have.

Lil. You'll thank me one day. (*Finishing the label.*) It's on! Right...Bye bye, lovie...

They hug. Eva clings on.

Lil. Let go now.

Eva. Don't want to. I can't let go. I should never have let go of Mutti and Vati in Germany.

Lil. It's for your own good.

Eva. I'd rather get bombed. Mutti claimed that I would be better off without her but I don't agree.

Lil. I'll visit you at the weekend.

<u>Beat Five</u>

Eva. We've got to stop. He'll take us over the edge. Got to get away from him. (She starts to choke and cough). Panic. Everyone will die because of me. The kids on the train are going into the abyss because I am the ungrateful one.

Eva. This can't happen! It mustn't happen! Time to act. Help! Leave me alone! Ratcatcher has me by the throat can't breath. Leave me alone! Help! I see my mother

at the train window that I can't open. I see the children on the train going over the abyss. I have to get away. Time to act out of necessity to get away. (*Leaps and lands with a roll, then lies still.)*

Beat Six

Lil. Eva! Eva Schlesinger!

Eva raises her head. She is dazed.

Ava. Am I in the abyss? Where am I?

Lil. You're with me.

Eva. Did I get away? Am I safe?

Lil. And how.

Eva. Has the Ratcatcher gone? Did he disappear?

Lil. There's no one there.

Eva. Are you sure? I need to be sure that he's gone.

Lil. I'm sure.

Eva. He didn't get me. I escaped.

Lil. Have you broken anything?

Eva. ***(sitting up slowly)*****. Don't think so.** Adjusting to the realization that I could get away from the Ratcatcher.

Lil. You didn't hit your head.

Eva. Are you cross? Are you mad at me for getting away?

Lil. Cross! (Realizing she isn't). No. (She pauses.) I'm sorry.

Eva. You're sorry? Mutti would never have been sorry.

Lil. Should've realized. Shouldn't have made you go.

Eva. The ground was moving. Justifying my actions

Lil. It isn't what you need most.

Eva. Couldn't keep my balance. I was falling into the Abyss

Lil. I didn't want you to go. More than Margaret and Nora. Don't know why.

Eva. You didn't say. Please be honest with me. Always tell me the truth about how things.

Lil. Didn't want to upset you. If I'd clung, you would've done. Can you get up?

Eva. Have I been very bad? Is the Ratcatcher going to get me? Are you mad enough to send me away?

Lil. No. Eva. I'm the one who got it wrong.

This scene is important because it establishes several key insights to Eva's character: Firstly, we see how deeply she fears being sent away again and that she believes that the Ratcatcher is stocking her; wanting to punish her. Secondly, we realize that Eva has the courage and determination to protect herself. When she jumps from the train she has taken her first steps toward managing her own destiny. Finally, Eva and Lil establish a more solid bond. Lil recognizes how deeply she cares for Eva and that she needs to stay with her. Her apology to Eva for sending her away is a key difference from Helga because Eva believes that Helga would never have apologized for her actions. Later in the play we see that much of Evelyn's anger and resentment toward Helga comes from her need to hear Helga apologize for sending her away.

KINDERTRANSPORT Betty Bernhard Notes 6/10/12

-Children are evacuated to save their lives.
No country was willing to accept refugees except finally Britain and The Dominican Republic.

-The moral question: is it better to die together or try to save a child by sending it to safety. Huge sacrifice on both sides. Love and resentment. Every emotion and reason has the opposite.

-TORN AWAY
-ALONE
-PIECES CANNOT REJOIN
-BARRIERS: TIME/PLACE/LOYALTY/ ETHNICITY
-Memories hidden, forbidden, repressed
-Many photos show children near barbed wife
-Children clutching dolls
-Children with numbers on paper around their necks
-Moving trains
-Ships
-
Important icons in play are the letters, photos, and books.
Connecting props are the rat catcher book, doll, train sett, harmonica
-
German side closed in for safety
This family has money, Father is/was a banker. It costs to buy Eva a visa.

British family side more open but evidence is still hidden in attic. They Are also traumatized by the Blitz. The Germans said that the Jews were Not German citizens. Speaking with a German accent in Britain made one suspected of being an enemy alien or a spy.

Eva doesn't completely fit in anywhere. Emotionally frozen until the end.

The underlying image is the rise of the Nazis and their anti-Semitism. I think that making a set floor in the shape of a swastika would show the Underlying (underfoot) problem, the fracture, the irony of a sign for Peace and prosperity being turn into something ugly.

Or possibly a Star of David using the points and main center.

The scenes have to be differentiated but also intersect.
Separate incidents all connected.

The play is from the viewpoint of Eva embedded in Evelyn. We see her in the innocence of what is happening in the scene with Helga that is
Eva turnsthis memory against her mother at end of play.

The breaking glass of Crystal Night is always mentioned in the research as a starting point for open fascism. Could this image fit in somewhere? At least in sound? Lights? Sound as part of the architecture of the play. Trains, boats, train stations, the folk songs.

Icon of the rat-catcher big stylized done in shadow. (Not to look like Batman signal!)

Stacks of small suitcases and carriers of children perhaps with snacks, book
Ripped and frayed letters and photos
Can they be walked on? Some on floor or part of floor.

Boxes in the attic …who gave Evelyn those dishes? Her marriage appears to have failed. Only "your father" is mentioned. The chipped crystal glass is same as the Crystal Night. It may remind her somehow. She wants to get rid of it but she wants to keep it. How to show this denial, the holding in of emotion and memory?

There are many parallels in the play:
Helga tries to prepare Eva for the trip to Britain
Evelyn tries to prepare Faith for her establishment of separate housing.

Neither Helga nor Evelyn wants to let go even if it is essential.
Show this with…ribbon breaking or let loose as in when big ships
Leave shore.

Put numbers on the audience as they come in?
Ask for "papers" when they enter? How to identify with those children.

Eva is 9 in Germany at start and 16 as a young woman at the end.

Helga is Eva's Mother whom we see preparing Eva for departure ato England and their brief reunion in England with Helga en route to NYC. Eva (18) does not want to go. That life is over for her, but is it?
Evelyn is the older assimilated Eva.

Faith is her daughter unaware of her heritage but who becomes hungry to know it as the truth comes out in the attic.

Lil is the English foster Mother of Eva/Evelyn.
And the grandmother of Faith. She knows the truth and keeps it secret.

The author says that the play takes place in a storage room in the attic of a cluttered suburban house in London. One room can work but what happens in the rapid transitions and the scenes NOT in the attic? There is a beauty in Seeing almost a mirror like view of the attic replicated into 2 mirror images. Within scene l Helga is her home in Germany preparing Eva to leave. Does this take place in the frame of the attic? Or is it isolated with light?

Is this entire play taking place inside Evelyn's head or memory as she Is breaking down at the end? If it's a memory it can be fluid, not realistic, Is there a collage of period images before play starts for context? Is Eva in those?

Show starts contained and dark and then opens up. Faith brings light.

(Inside?) storage room Eva aged 9 is reading a book of The Rat Catcher. Helga her mother is sewing her a coat to wear for the evacuation to England.

Transition to

P 4-7
Faith, daughter of Evelyn, is moving out, going thru boxes in the attic for things for her apartment. Evelyn wants her to be independent. Not clear she really is ready to leave (parallels opening scene).

Transition to
P 7 Eva sewing and Helga pushing her to finish.

P 9 Back to attic with Evelyn and Faith going thru things in boxes.

P 10 -12
Over to Eva and Helga packing little suitcase mouth organ, doll, books, the Haggadah for Passover. Faith is also seen in parallel universe.

P 12 Over to Eva and Helga…business of shoe and watch and jewelry.

P 13 Lil (Grandmother to Faith) and Faith in attic

P 14 Eva and Helga parallel to Evelyn and Faith.

P 16
Ratcatcher's shadow hovers as Eva/Helga and Evelyn/Faith read from book. Same one? Or Duplicate?

Helga stays in Ratcatcher book mode while Eva transitions to the train Ratcatcher speaks. We hear his music /train mingling. Eva Is leaving the station. Hoop Hoop Reiter song background And Eva sings it.

P 18-20
Train stops. Border of Germany where Nazi guard is watching all who are leaving. He goes through her meager belonging and throws her small treasures and clothing on ground. Tries to be nice by giving her a toffee candy. They cross into border of Holland. She throws candy out. Tells audience about the food they received. Sounds make transitions. Salt and candy to indicate on the boat.

P 21
Last flashback to Helga and Eva before she leaves for the train (same as opening scene)
Helga finishes the story. Freezes?
Faith plays discordant tune on mouth organ which
Turns into MUSIC RECORDED? Freezes as slow fade to black.

ACT I SCENE 2

P 22
Faith reading Eva's first letter from Helga in Germany. While…
Simultaneously Eva waits for her English family to fetch her. She is eating a hunk of bread and a mug of tea and thinking her answers to that letter out loud to us.

P 23
English Organizers arrives to tell her that her foster family is late.
Language barrier problems.

P 24
Organizer leaves. Back to Faith still reading the letter above. She plays the mouth organ she finds in the box.

P 25
Back to Eva waiting for her new family. She tries to open heel of shoe.

P 26 Lil enters and sees what Faith is up to in attic.

SLIDES IMMEDIATELY INTO Lil meeting Eva for the first time.
P 26-29 they attempt conversation, cigarette bit, Eva says she is hungry so Lil goes off to find food for her.

Immediately slides into Lil bringing cake and tea to Faith.
P 28-34 Lil and Faith start to get into the real story.

Immediately goes to p. 34-36 but the time is later than p. 26-29.

P 36 Back to Faith, same time as before,
Lil says Faith arrived in Jan 7 in 1939. (When Eva/Evelyn turned 16 she Changed the date of her birthday…another erasure of past and Helga.

P 37-40 Lil and Eva discuss her efforts to get her family jobs and visas.

EVA leaves

Evelyn enters; Lil tries to hide what they are doing
Lil leaves.
Evelyn and Faith argue about the papers, etc. on floor
P 43-45
Lil comes back and all three have a long argument.

P 45-46
Ratcatcher shadow appears over them.
Surreal moment where Eva and Evelyn blend; past and present.
Evelyn has a total breakdown.
We see the struggle to forget and to integrate at the same time.

End of ACT I

Intermission

Act II Scene1

P 47 Attic is dim and smoke-filled from old cigarettes.
(Put old used cigarettes in an ashtray during intermission)

Evelyn's past (Helga and Eva) are played out in her head of the last conversation they had in Germany)

Present time back to Evelyn with Faith banging on door of attic to get let in. Evelyn has locked herself in for some time. They shout through the door.

P 48 Postman imitating Hitler appears, a memory of when Evelyn was small and new in England. Is he delivering the parcel with the Rattenfanger book?

p. 48-51
Helga and Eva where Helga tries to impress upon her the Jewish heritage she is part of.

P 51-55
Scene broken by Lil pounding on door of attic and coming in to see the state of the room and Evelyn.

P55- 59 Eva and Lil The Evacuation of children from London Blitz to outside city for safety. Gas masks. Lil sends her off in a scene parallel to Eva

being sent away by her mother Helga. Eva doesn't want to go and jumps off train.
When she left Germany she was unable to do that.
P 50-62
Lil and Evelyn fight over the past. Evelyn resentful for being rescued.
Grown-up fight between women. They rip up all the mementos.

P 62 Lil has gone to restroom. Guard finds Eva alone and questions why she hasn't yet left for evacuation out of London. Eva Lil and Guard scene./

P 66-68
As Eva and Lil rip up mementos Evelyn and
Lil do the same. Lil has to slide between scenes immediately.

P 68
Eva now 15 is at cinema with Lil and Belsen photos of holocaust horror come in the screen.

P 70
Faith still trying to get into the room.

P 70-71
Eva and Lil finishing hem. Part of scene on P62 where she
Is being prepared to leave London for safety of country.

P 71-74
Evelyn Faith Lil finally tell the truth.

P 74 Eve/Evelyn now 17 meets her mother Helga after 8 years. She has come to take Eva to America. Eva doesn't want to go. What is family?

P 77 Helga/Ratcatcher comes to take her away…subtle convergence of Past and the story.

END OF ACT TWO, SCENE 1

ACT TWO SCENE 1

P 78 in attic all the mess has been cleaned up.

We still see Helga with her suitcase standing off to side (Eva is Still 18 here, Helga waiting to take her to New York)
It is her existence being wiped away by Evelyn? Is forgetting or pushing away the past, a form of murder/genocide also? Her presence is there but she is not in the scene.

Faith and Evelyn are back where we started going thru things in the attic after their big blow up.

Evelyn speaks in very controlled sentences, still barely hanging on to the revelations. Lil is leaving for her home after the blow-up. Cool and tense.

p. 78 Evelyn tries to give her dishes and silver to Faith for her new apartment.
Faith seems to not want them (her heritage?) Is Evelyn giving away the things that Lil gave her but that she now doesn't want? Can you give away the past?

P 81 Evelyn finally tells Faith about her Jewish heritage. E was Baptized at 18. She never told her husband who is out of the picture Completely that she was Jewish. She must have passed for a Christian German since Brits are so quick to hear any class or ethnic accent.

P 82
Evelyn sorts thru stuff. Eva and Helga are at the pier. Helga is leaving. They have painful argument. Helga leaves on boat never to see her again.

P 86 Faith vows to go to Germany and find her relatives. Evelyn is finished with all that, she says. Faith wants to take some of her toys with her just as Eva did in the first scene.P

P87 Ratcatcher shadow appears. Is he after Faith now I wonder?

END

Pomona College
Allen Theatre

pre show?

Kindertransport
Setting Notes

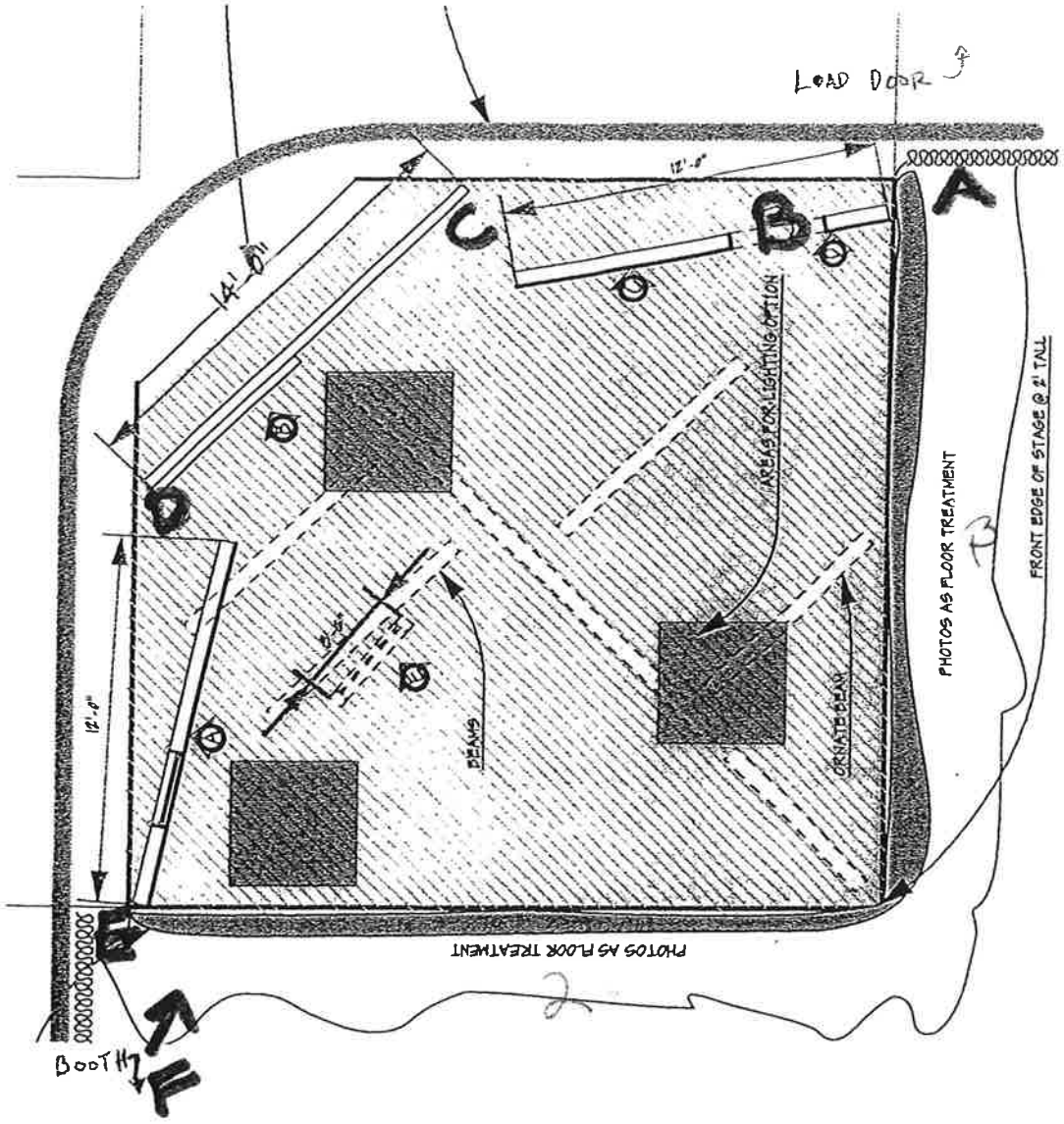
SCENE	PAGE	YEAR	LOCATION	SETTING	LOCATION ONSTAGE	LIGHTING FX	NOTES
I.1.A.	3	1938	GERMANY	HELGA ATTIC	SR		
I.1.B.	4	1980	LONDON	EVELYN ATTIC	SL		
I.1.C.	7	1938	GERMANY	HELGA ATTIC	SR		
I.1.D.	9	1980	LONDON	EVELYN ATTIC	SL		
I.1.E.	10	1938/1980	GERMANY/LONDON	BOTH ATTICS	SR & SL		PAST AND PRESENT SIMULTANEOUS
I.1.F.	13	1980	LONDON	EVELYN ATTIC	SL		
I.1.G.	14	1938/1980	GERMANY/LONDON	BOTH ATTICS	SR & SL	PG 17 POSSIBLE PUPPET SHADOW RATCATCHER	PAST AND PRESENT SIMULTANEOUS
I.1.H.	17	1938	GERMANY	TRAIN CAR	CC GUARD ENT FROM GRAVEL PATH	FX USING BEAM PROJECTORS OR SOMETHING ELSE TO BE BLINDING HEADLIGHTS WITH TRAIN WHISTLE SHRIEK. BOX OF LIGHT REPRESENTING TRAIN CAR. LIGHT FLICKERS WHEN TRAIN IS MOVING	
I.1.H.I.	20	1938	HOOK OF HOLLAND	OUTSIDE TRAIN	DDS EDGE	THE NEXT MORNING--SUNNIER, MOMENT OF HOPE	
I.1.I.	20	1938	ENGLISH CHANNEL	BOAT	DDC CORNER	WATERY, SEASICK	
I.1.J.	21	1938	ENGLAND	DOCKS	X TO CC	SHAFT OF BACKLIGHT--CLEAR EDGE TO SHOW PATH OF LIGHT ANALOGOUS TO DOCK	FAITH AND HELGA ENT, REALITIES OVERLAP
I.1.K.	21	1938/1980	–	–	EVA CC, HELGA POOL FAR SR CORNER, FAITH POOL FAR SL CORNER	LOCATION LESS IMPORTANT. ISOLATE 3 WOMEN.	
I.2.A.	22	1939/1980	SUBURB OF LONDON	TRAIN STATION/ EVELYN'S ATTIC	TRAIN STATION SR (BENCH CENTER OF SR). ATTIC SL.	Train skylight/tracks texture.	FAITH READS LETTER FAR SL CORNER WHILE TRAIN STATION IS SR. ORGANIZER ENT FROM GRAVEL PATH.
I.2.B.	26	1980	LONDON	EVELYN'S ATTIC	SL		
I.2.C.	26	1939	SUBURB OF LONDON	TRAIN STATION	SR (BENCH)	Train skylight/tracks texture.	LIL X FROM SL TO SR (TIES THIS SCENE TO LAST).
I.2.D.	29	1980	LONDON	EVELYN'S ATTIC	SL		LIL X FROM SR TO SL (TIES THIS SCENE TO LAST).
I.2.E.	33	1939	MANCHESTER	LIL'S HOUSE	SR (TABLE & 2 CHAIRS UR)		LIL X FROM SL TO SR (TIES THIS SCENE TO LAST).
I.2.F.	36	1980	LONDON	EVELYN'S ATTIC	SL		LIL X FROM SR TO SL (TIES THIS SCENE TO LAST).
I.2.G.	37	1939	MANCHESTER	LIL'S HOUSE	SR (TABLE & 2 CHAIRS UR)		LIL X FROM SL TO SR (TIES THIS SCENE TO LAST).
I.2.H.	40	1980	LONDON	EVELYN'S ATTIC	SL		LIL X FROM SR TO SL (TIES THIS SCENE TO LAST).
I.2.I.	45	1939/1980	–	–	DC	POOL ON 2 WOMEN DC. LOCATION LESS IMPORTANT. RATCATCHER ACTOR SHADOW UC BALC.	
II.1.A.	47	1938	GERMANY	HELGA'S ATTIC	SR	FLASHBACK SR	
II.1.B.	47	1980	LONDON	EVELYN'S ATTIC	SL		EVA X FROM SR TO SIT ON EDGE OF STAGE SL.
II.1.C.	48	1940	MANCHESTER	OUTSIDE LIL'S HOUSE	SL PATHWAY	OUTSIDE HOUSE.	POSTMAN ENT FROM PATH SR TO PATH SL.

Scene

OLIVE SCENE
? w/ body SL etc

Script Breakdown

Stage Entrances/Exits



1 DL curtain

2 Stair R

3 UL door w/out

3 Stair L

C UL flats gap

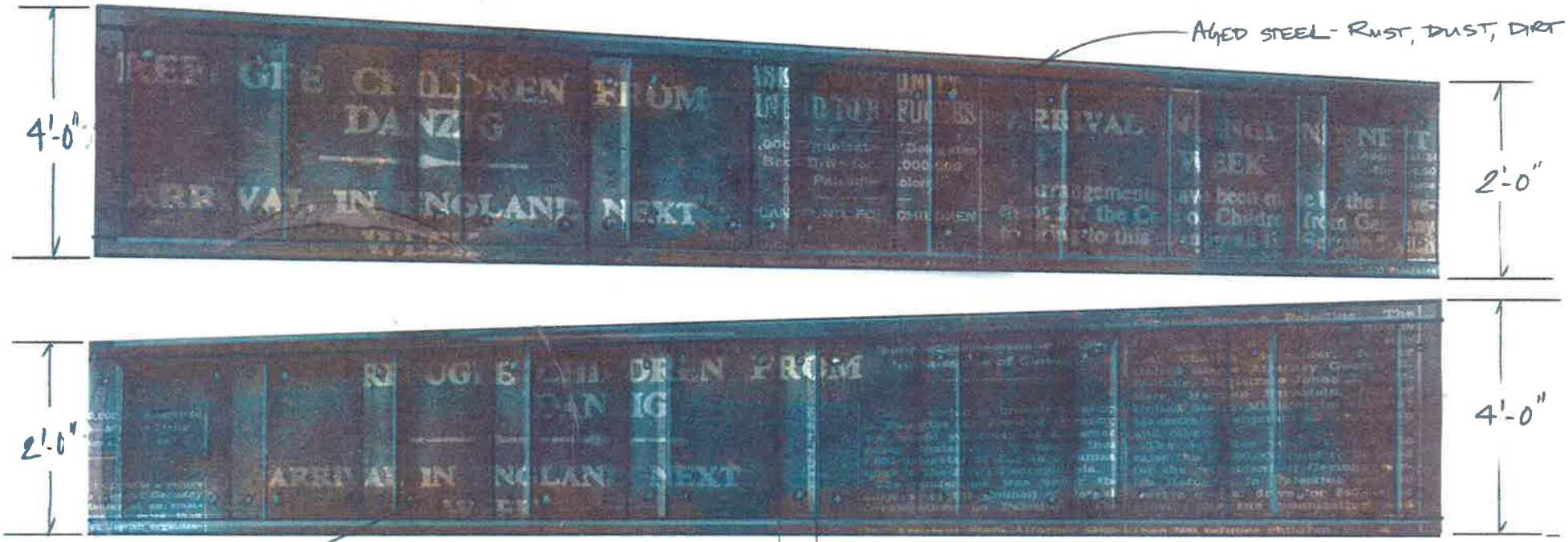
D UR flats gap

E DR curtain

F DR exterior door

Stage Model

DECK FACING SAMPLE.
PAINTED AS AGED STEEL

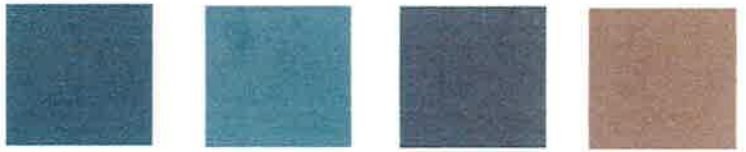


TEXT SAMPLE

REFUGEE CHILDREN FROM DANZIG

ARRIVAL IN ENGLAND NEXT WEEK

Arrangements have been made by the Movement for the Care of Children from Germany to bring to this country all the German Jewish and non-Aryan Christian children who remain in Danzig. The first party, consisting of 69 children up to the age of 14, is due to leave at the end of the week. Other parties will arrive at intervals during the next month.



Kindertransport

An Educational Study Guide:

For The Pomona College Theatre Department's
Production of Diane Samuels' *Kindertransport*
October 11-14, 2012, Seaver Theatre Pomona College

What is the Kindertransport?

The Kindertransport refers to the organized rescue program set up by the United Kingdom that occurred between December 1, 1938 and September 1, 1939, which rescued nearly 10,000 predominantly Jewish children from Nazi occupied territories in the nine months prior to the official outbreak of World War II.

Some prewar laws that affected Jewish children:

April 25, 1933—Government limits the number of Jews who can attend German high schools.

September 15, 1935—The Nuremberg Laws are passed: Jews are no longer German citizens and cannot marry or have relations with non-Jewish Germans. Jews are defined biologically and designated based on the religion of their grandparents rather than their own faith or cultural identity.

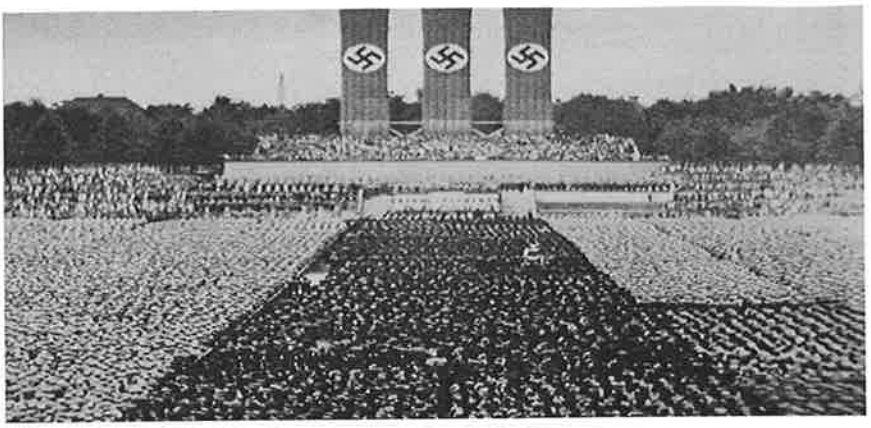
July 23, 1938 —All Jews older than 15 must carry a special identification card and must show card if asked to do so by any government official.

August 17, 1938 —Newborn Jewish children are to receive names only from a government approved list.

November 12, 1938 —Jews cannot attend plays, movies, concerts, or exhibitions.

November 15, 1938 — Jewish children are expelled from public schools and can only attend Jewish schools.

December 8, 1938—Jews can no longer attend German universities.



Nuremberg Rally, 1935

What led to the program?

Following the Nazi takeover of power in 1933, Hitler and the Nazi Party began to change German legislation in order to restrict the civil rights of Jews (*see box to the left).* As these laws made life increasingly hard on the Jewish population, Jewish organizations in Germany, Austria, and eventually Czechoslovakia, lobbied governments around the world to allow for the mass emigration of Jews from Nazi occupied territories.

A turning point for Great Britain's strict immigration laws occurred on the night known as *Kristallnacht*, also known as the *Night of Broken Glass*. On the nights of November 9 and 10, 1938, in retaliation for the assassination of German diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris, France, by Herschel Grynszpan, a German-born Polish Jew, a widespread organized *pogrom* took place across Germany and Austria. SA paramilitary units and civilians destroyed and burnt down Jewish-owned stores, schools, hospitals and homes. Over 250 synagogues and Jewish community centers were destroyed, nearly one hundred Jews were murdered in the streets and another 30,000 were arrested and sent to concentration camps.

Five days after "Kristallnacht" on November 15, 1938, a delegation of British Jewish leaders, part of the British Jewish Refugee Committee, appealed in person to Prime Mister Neville Chamberlain to loosen emigration laws into Britain from Nazi occupied territories. The following day the British Cabinet intensely debated the issue. The bill was eventually passed on to Parliament for a contested vote.

Germany, Nov. 10, 1938

"No foreign propagandist bent upon blackening Germany before the world could outdo the tale of burnings and beatings, of blackguardly assaults on defenseless and innocent people, which disgraced that country yesterday." – *The Times* Nov. 11, 1938

The New York Times.

NEW YORK, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 1938

PEND PUSH LANS

NAZIS SMASH, LOOT AND BURN JEWISH SHOPS AND TEMPLES UNTIL GOEBBELS CALLS HALT

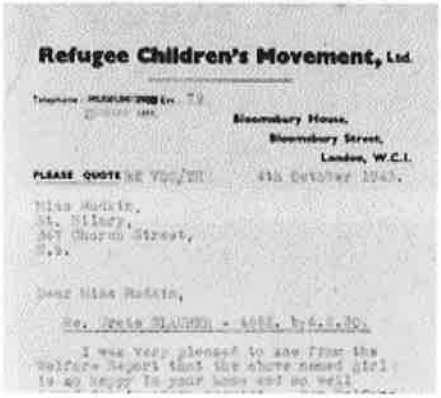
A Call To Action

The bill called for the British Government to waive certain immigration requirements to allow an unspecific number of unaccompanied children ranging from infants to teenagers under the age of 17 entry into Great Britain. The original idea was to grant these children temporary travel documents and it was expected the children would be reunited with their parents after "the crisis of war" ended.

> "Here is a chance of taking the young generation of a great people, here is a chance of mitigating to some extend the terrible suffering of their parents and their friends" – Home Secretary Sir Samuel Hoare

The bill was argued in Parliament for almost an entire week until November 21, 1938. Right before the final debate of the issue in the House of Commons, British Home Secretary, Sir Samuel Hoare, met with a large group of representatives from various Jewish and non-Jewish organizations working to emigrate refugees. They merged their agencies and created the nondenominational organization, the Movement for the Care of Children of Germany, later known as the Refugee Children's Movement (RCM). With the agencies promise to find homes for all of the children as well as fund the entire operation Sir Samuel Hoare agreed to issue travel documents on the basis of group lists rather then individual applicants in order to speed up the immigration process and the bill was finally passed.

However, some restrictions for the children's entry were still established. Each child was to have a sponsor, who promised that the child would not become a financial burden on the public, and who was required to have a guarantee of £50 (approximately $1,500 in today's currency) to finance the child's eventual resettlement or re-emigration after the war.



Refugee Children's Movement, Ltd.

Bloomsbury House,
Bloomsbury Street,
London, W.C.1.

PLEASE QUOTE ... 4th October 1943.

Miss Martin,
St. Hilary,
367 Thorne Street,
S.W.

Dear Miss Martin,

Re. Jean [illegible] - Age, 4.6.30.

I was very pleased to see from the Welfare Report that the above named girl is so happy in your home and so well...

Letter From RCM, 1943

GERMAN REFUGEES FILL ENTRY QUOTA

Prof. Chamberlain Declares 27,370 Limit for Reich and Austria Will Be Reached

PLEAS SWAMP CONSULATES

Committee Here Receives 500 Letters a Day From Stateless Persons Seeking Haven

NY Times – Sep 13, 1938

ASK JEWISH UNITY IN AID TO REFUGEES

1,000 Organizations' Delegates Back Drive for $2,000,000 for Palestine Colony.

PLAN FUND FOR CHILDREN

Additional $40,000 Is Sought to Support 500—Medalie Hails 'Renaissance of Culture.'

United action to provide a refuge in Palestine for Jews of Germany was urged yesterday at an emer-

NY Times – Feb 5, 1934

Sir Samuel Hoare

The Decision

There are a number of factors that contributed to the British government allowing the issuing of the group visas for these endangered children:

1) The UK felt particularly responsible for the refugees from Europe who wanted to emigrate to Palestine, but had just recently denied 10,000 Jews in order to not endanger diplomatic relationships with the Arab states.

2) Seeing itself as a world power, the UK hoped its action would lead to other world powers to do the same.

3) Untiring persistence by refugee advocates and organizations leaders.

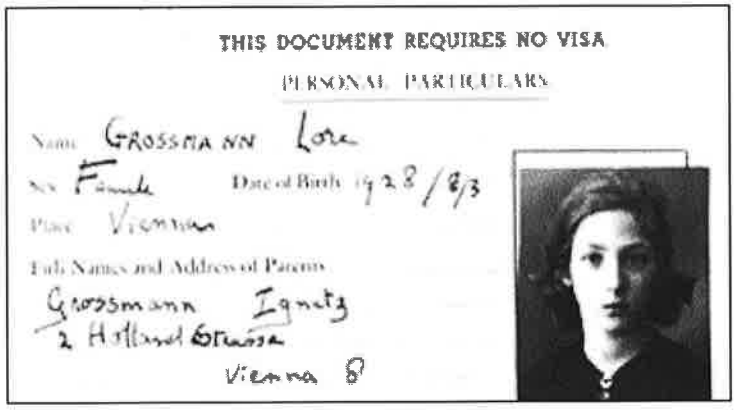
4) The change in policy was relatively easy to carry out with the agreement of the British public
   a) Children aroused sympathy
   b) Children posed little danger in the labor market (originally meant only to be short-term immigrants and believed they would return home or eventually emigrate to the USA or Palestine)
   c) Great Britain had a long tradition of boarding schools (therefore it seemed normal for children to grow up away from home from a relatively young age).

Organization and Implementation

After the passing of the bill in Parliament, The Movement for the Care of Children from Germany along with The World Jewish Relief Fund quickly sent representatives to Germany and Austria to establish a system for choosing, organizing and transporting the children.

There are many different stories about how sponsor parents found out about the program. The word originally got out on November 25, 1938 when there was the first BBC Home Service radio announcement appealing for British citizens to open up their homes as foster homes for the children. Just days following, there were over 500 offers across Great Britain. Soon after, representatives from the RCM began visiting the homes of people who offered to house the children. They had no requirements for the religion or ethnic background of the host families. They only were assessing if the house looked clean and if the families seemed respectable hosts.

In Germany a group of organizers were created with the job of making priority lists for the first transports. They began to collect the names of Jewish children who were already detained in concentration camps, in danger of arrest, threatened with deportation, had parents who were too poor to keep them, or were in orphanages.


THIS DOCUMENT REQUIRES NO VISA

PERSONAL PARTICULARS

Name GROSSMANN Lore

Sex Female Date of Birth 1928 / 8/3

Place Vienna

Full Names and Address of Parents

Grossmann Ignatz

2 Holland Strasse

Vienna 8

Identification Card for Kinder

A Kinder's Suitcase


HOMES FOR REFUGEE CHILDREN

Lord Samuel and Lord Selborne, joint chairmen of the British Committee for the Care of Children from Germany, have issued an appeal for help in boarding the children in private homes throughout the country. They say that at least 50,000 children must be brought out of Germany at once, but the committee cannot take responsibility for bringing the children into this country unless they have assurances as to their maintenance and their future.

The Times **– Nov 25, 1938**

"...we didn't know and we couldn't even foresee, we couldn't surmise for a moment that for many or most, it would be the last goodbye, that most of those children would never see their parents again." – Norbert Wollheim, Kindertransport worker and later Holocaust survivor.

Identification Tags for Kinder

Once a child was selected and put on the group list, his/her guardian or parents were made aware and given a travel date and departure details. It was then left up to them to make the difficult decision of whether to send their kids away or refuse the service. The children were only allowed to carry one small sealed suitcase with absolutely no valuables, and only ten marks or less in money. For identification, many of the children were given only a manila tag with a number on the front and their name on the back (*see photo above)*, while others were issued more official numbered identity cards with their photo (*see photo to the left).*

Where to and from?

The first Kindertransport departed from Berlin on December 1, 1938. It arrived the next day in Harwich, Great Britain with about 200 children from a Jewish orphanage in Berlin, which had been destroyed on *Kristallnacht* less then one month earlier. Ten days after the first transport from Germany, the first transport left Vienna, Austria in route for London as well with a group of 500 children. Over the first three months of the transports, children mainly came from Germany. Afterwards, the emphasis of transports shifted to Austria. In March 1939, just days after the German *Wehrmacht* tanks moved into Czechoslovakia and Hitler created the Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia that came under direct Nazi occupation, transports from across Czechoslovakia were hastily organized. The most famous transport from Czechoslovakia actually started independently from the Kindertransport and was organized almost entirely single handedly by Sir Nicholas Winton (*see The "British Schindler" right).* Groups of Polish Jews were also organized in a few transports directly from Poland in February and August of 1939.

Since the German government decreed that the evacuations must not block any ports in Germany, the trains had to cross over from German territory into the Netherlands in order to reach England. Most of them eventually arrived at port at the Hook of Holland right outside Rotterdam, Holland. From there, most the transports traveled by ferry to the British ports of Harwich or Southampton.

Nicholas Winton with a rescued Kinder

The "British Schindler"

As a 29-year old stockbroker in London, about to take a ski holiday to Switzerland, Nicholas Winton was called by his friend Martin Blake who asked him to cancel his trip and come to Prague. He arrived to find thousands of refugees living in camps trying to emigrate to escape the inevitable take over of Czechoslovakia by the Nazis. He quickly made it his duty to transport as many refugees children to safely as possible. He successfully transported 669 children to the UK in only nine months before the Nazis invaded and took control of the rest of Czechoslovakia.

The final transport took place on September 1, 1939, the day the German army rolled their tanks into Poland. This event eventually provoked Great Britain and France to declare war on Germany just days afterwards, marking the official beginning of World War II. The last transport of *Kinder* from Holland to Great Britain left on May 14, 1940, the day the Dutch army surrendered to Germany. Tragically, hundreds of *Kinder* were still in parts of Belgium and the Netherlands during the German invasion, unable to successfully make it to Great Britain.

"...there were lots of children in the compartment, and we were frightened, excited. And there were other kids in the same boat, so I suppose we didn't know what to expect." – Alice Masters, a Kinder from Czechoslovakia

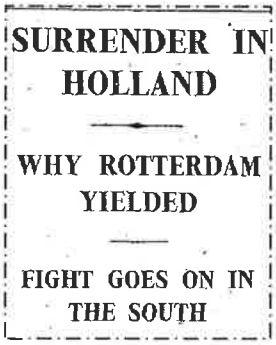
Map of Transport from Prague to London


GERMAN ARMY ATTACKS POLAND;
CITIES BOMBED, PORT BLOCKADED;
DANZIG IS ACCEPTED INTO REICH

NY Times – Sep 1, 1939


BRITISH NOTE MADE
WAR DECLARATION

NY Times – Sep 4, 1939


SURRENDER IN HOLLAND

WHY ROTTERDAM YIELDED

FIGHT GOES ON IN THE SOUTH

The Times – May 15, 1940

Dovercourt Holiday Camp, 1939

On Safe Soil

Once in the UK the children with prearranged foster families travelled by train directly from the port city to places all across Great Britain. The majority would arrive at Liverpool Street Station in London, where they would meet their host guardians for the first time.

Other *Kinders* arriving in Great Britain did not have prearranged host families. In those cases the children were temporarily sheltered in specialized holding centers until a host family could be arranged. These camps were located at unused summer holiday camps just outside Harwich or Lowestoft, Great Britain. Dovercourt Bay, just outside Harwich was the largest of these transit camps (*See "Dovercourt Holiday Camp" below).*

Dovercourt Holiday Camp

The camp was staffed completely by volunteers who worked day and night to feed, shelter and do their best to arranged host families so they would have room for more Kinders who arrived each day.

There are contradictory reports about the conditions and workings of these camps but overall most research has shown they did the best they could with the small amount of resources they were given to run these camps. The biggest problem was the cold. The winter that the camp opened for the Kinders in December of 1938, was the coldest on record. In unheated wooden housing and with only the clothes that they brought in the one suitcase or from donations from aid organizations, living in the camps during the winter months was understandably hard on the kids. These physical hardships only added to the even worse emotional struggles that each child had to face in the days and months immediately after leaving their parents.

A controversial part of Dovercourt was the organization of the weekly Sundays. As a way to get the children adopted, every Sunday, foster parents were invited to come to the camp and pick their children. The children would put on their Sunday best and paraded in front of perspective host families.

This led to the smaller and more Aryan looking children getting chosen first, while more troublesome teenagers were left in the camp for much longer periods. This type of adoption also led to some stories of older girls, usually 14 and up, being chosen by foster parents who used them as maids. Even though these experiences did occur, they are rare in comparison to the overall number of Kinders adopted from these transit camps. In general, the camp at Dovercourt acted as a very important and successful facility that resulted in the rescuing and adoption of thousands of Kinders.

Who took the children in?

The children of the Kindertransport were dispersed all across the United Kingdom. About half were adopted by both Jewish and non-Jewish foster families. The rest were sent to hostels, group homes/orphanages, and even farms all across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Many of the children who were not fortunate enough to get a foster family to sponsor them and send them to boarding school were sent directly into the labor force, mainly in agriculture or domestic service, sometimes as early as the age of 14.

The type of experiences of growing up as a *Kinder* were exceptionally diverse, with almost 10,000 personally different experiences. Some were well-treated, developing close bonds and became as much a part of their host family as any member, while others less fortunate *Kinder* were mistreated and even abused.

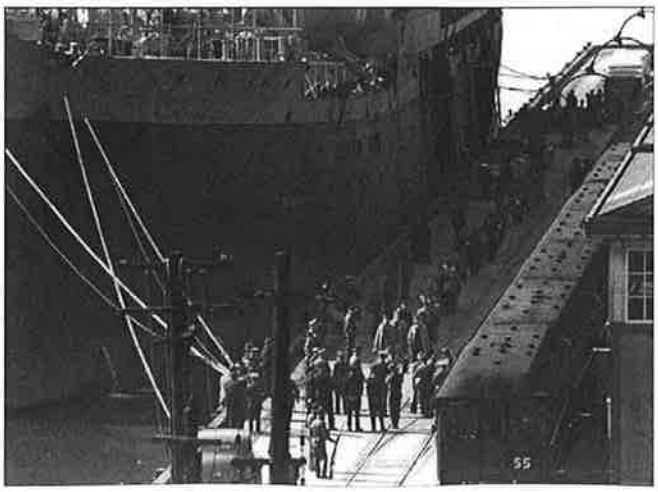
Kinders receiving food at Dovercourt

Life During the War

With the outbreak of the war, the British ordered the interment of all males refugees, ages 16 to 70, from enemy countries. Many of the older male *Kinder* who had arrived were now of age and therefore interned. No official statistics have been compiled but approximately 1,000 *Kinders* were at one point interned in a interment camp. In the first six months of the war the government rounded up and examined 64,000 German, Austrian and Italian alien refugees, in camps like The Isle of Man, the largest of the interment camps. However, the vast majority were only held for a short period of time and then released after being found to be "friendly aliens" most of them Jews like the interned Kinders. There were also some efforts to move interned refugees overseas to North America or Australia. This became the fate of around 400 *Kinders* that were sent to either Australia or Canada, some on ships with horrific conditions such as the famous HMT *Dunera* (*see* "HMT *Dunera" right)*

If the *Kinders* who were interned reached the age of 18 most were given the chance to work for the war effort. About 1,000 German and Austrian Kinders would go on to serve in the British armed forces, some even joined combat units that would eventually face the enemy they fled as younger children. Others joined Special Force units where their native German language could be put to use as translators and code breakers.

As the war progressed and fighting escalated, the British government undertook massive evacuation programs with the goal of evacuating all children and pregnant women from major British cities and ports to "safe areas" away from the German bombing raids. Approximately 40 percent of the Kinders took part in these evacuations. Some fortunate to be in school were usually well taken care of in organized evacuations, but other less fortunate children were sent to isolated families in remote areas where it took years for refugees organizations to locate them after the war.



HMT *Dunera* arrival in Sydney, 1940

Children on an evacuation bus, 1940

HMT *Dunera*

His Majesty's Transport *Dunera* was a British passenger ship build originally for troop transport during WWII. It is most famous for its horrifying trip from Liverpool to Australia known as the "57 Days of Hell." On July 10· 1940, 2,542 interned "enemy aliens" were deported as suspects of being German agents. They included 200 Italians and 251 German POWs along with a few Nazi sympathizers, but also included 2,036 anti-Nazi interned prisoners, mainly Jewish refugees, some of them prior-Kinders.

In an overcrowded ship that was made to hold only 1,600, the over 2,500 prisoners faced appalling conditions. Beatings from the poorly trained guards and the unsanitary medical and toilet areas, which lead to widespread dysentery, were daily struggles. The conditions were so bad that upon arrival in Sydney the first Australian that came on board, medical army officer Alan Frost, wrote a report which led to the Lieutenant in charge of the ship being court-marshaled.

The one positive outcome of the voyage was that the story of the ship lead to the awareness and protest against the mishandling of interned "enemy aliens" and eventually the release of many interned in late 1940.

Interned "enemy aliens at the Isle of Man, 1940

Other Children Transports

The Kindertransport was the largest and most organized of such child transports during the war, however there were a few similar programs that were organized in other countries prior to the start of the war. The United States took in approximately 1,400 unaccompanied mostly Jewish children directly from Europe from 1934 to 1945, now known as "The One Thousand Children" (or "OTC"). However, unlike the Kindertransport the OTC was completely organized and run by private American individuals and organizations, who conducted the operations quietly in order to avoid attention from the large amount of isolationist and anti-Semitic movements who fought against such operations in the US (*see "Wagner-Rogers Bill" right).*

Similar programs were also enacted in other non-Nazi occupied countries prior to the war such as France, Holland and Belgium. However, similar to the United States none of these countries governments acted to modify their immigration policies to allow the rescue of children. There are numerous accounts of refugees being taken in by families in these countries prior to the war. Unfortunately, all of these countries soon came under Nazi occupation and many of these people were ultimately sent to their deaths.

Kinder arriving in Harwich, 1938

Wagner-Rogers Bill

A bill introduced in February 1939 and sponsored by U.S. Senator Robert Wagner (D-N.Y.) and Rep. Edith Rogers (R-Mass), proposing the allowance of 20,000 refugee children from Germany, to enter and stay in the United States for the duration of the war. Even though many joined to support the bill, it faced strong resistance by isolationist organizations such as the American Coalition of Patriotic Societies, the Daughters of the American Revolution and the American Legion. Arguing that "charity begins at home" they stated that such an act would lead to the beginning of uncontrollable wave of immigrants. During the debate in the House and the Senate, the Roosevelt Administration sadly remained largely silent and the the bill never made it pass committee with the largely negative public support.

After the War

With the help of the Allied coalition, the United Kingdom was never invaded by Nazi forces, resulting in most of the Kinders surviving the war. However, the end of the war revealed the atrocious acts of the Holocaust and brought about the news that most of the Kinders' parents were killed among the nearly six million European Jews, including 1.5 million children, that had been murdered by the Nazis and their collaborators.

Only about 40 percent of the Kinders were able to be reunited with at least one of their parents, who either spent the war in hiding or were somehow able to survive the Nazi concentration and death camps. Even if the parents and children were able to be reunited, the years during the war made making a return to normalcy for the family almost completely impossible. Every child who took part in the Kindertransport was vastly effected and forever changed by their experience. Many children were already late teenagers or older. In addition many children who were well-cared for had become a true part of their host family and could not feel the same about their parents again. Many of the younger Kinders did not remember much of their parents and many older ones faced difficult emotional questions concerning why their parents sent them away in the first place.

In the years since the war Kinders have spread out across the entire globe and have taken up jobs in a large variety of fields, many becoming prominent figures in public life including Nobel Prize winning scientists and Olympic athletes. In all, the Kindertransport successfully brought nearly 10,000 children to relative safety in only nine short months. It was truly one the greatest acts of combined heroism and human kindness during mankind's darkest hour.

Sources for more information:

- *Kindertransport* (1993), Diane Samuels, Publ. Nick Hern Books
- *Kindertransport* (1995), Olga Levy Drucker, Publ. H. Holt & Co.
- *Into the Arms for Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport (2000), (DVD)* Warner Bros., *(Book)* M. Jonathan & D. Oppenheimer, Publ. Bloomsbury
- *United States Holocaust Memorial Museum* – Holocaust Encyclopedia, *(webpage)*

Created by Zack Kraushar (PO '13) for Prof. Betty Bernhard, Pomona College Theatre Department
Support was provided by a Hahn Teaching with Technology grant from Pomona College
September 1, 2012 - Contact <bbernhard@pomona.edu>

Play Program

Theatre for the
Claremont Colleges

Pomona College Department of
Theatre and Dance Presents

KINDERTRANSPORT

A Holocaust Play by Diane Samuels

Pomona College
Allen Theatre
October 11-14, 2012

Theatre for the Claremont Colleges
Pomona College Department of Theatre and Dance
Presents

KINDERTRANSPORT

A Holocaust Play by Diane Samuels

Directed by
Betty Bernhard

Costume Design by
Sherry Linnell

Scenic Design by
Logan Wince

Lighting Design by
Christina L. Munich

Sound & Video Design by
Jeff Polunas

Production Stage Manager
Kaitlyn Casimo (PO '13)

Performed by special arrangement with Susan Schulman:
A Literary Agency, 454 West 44th St. New York, N.Y. 10036

Director's Notes

Kindertransport was written in the late 1980's by Diane Samuels, a Jewish English playwright. The subject of the play is the evacuation of at nearly 10,000 mainly Jewish children from Germany to England, where they were taken to foster parents for the duration of World War II. Many never knew they were born into Jewish families. Many were baptized as Christians by the foster families. Some were lovingly cared for and some were ill-treated; many never saw their Jewish parents again. Some went to look for their families in Germany but discovered they had died in the Holocaust; and some did find their birth families with varying success. The play raises serious questions about disturbed identities; the wrenching parental decision to gamble on saving their children's lives by sending them to safety on trains and ships, without their families and no certainty of the future, with their only identities and past carried in one small suitcase and a numbered tag around their necks.

Cast

Eva.....Roxanne Cook (PZ '13)

Evelyn's younger self

Helga.....Isabel Semler (PZ '15)

Eva/Evelyn's mother

Evelyn.....Alexandra Copp (SC '16)

English middle class woman

Faith.....Emily Hill (PO '16)

Evelyn's only child

Lil.....Tori Gaines (CMC '13)

Eva/Evelyn's foster mother

German Border Official.....Harrison Goodall (PO '16)

English Organizer.....Oliver Shirley (PO '15)

Postman.....Adam Faison (PZ '15)

Guard.....Sachit Taneja (PO '16)

~There will be one ten minute intermission~

Crew

ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGER.....Kevin Jaatinen (PZ '14)
PRODUCTION ASSISTANT.....Sarah Robertson (SC '16)

LIGHTING BOARD OPERATOR.....Hannah Gardenswatz (SC '15)
FOLLOW SPOT OPERATORS.....Marguerite Stern (PZ '14)
Jacob Barrera (PO '14)
SOUND/VIDEO OPERATOR.....Terese Briggs (SC '15)

STAGE/PROPS CREW.....Katia Jimenez (PO '14)
Andrew Kolczynski (PO '16)
Becca Marx (SC '16)

COSTUME CREW HEAD.....Adina Wells (PZ '15)
COSTUME CREW.....Kayla Dalsfoist (SC '13)
Amanda Jacobs(SC '14)
Hope Simpson (SC '13)
Angelica Townsend (PO '13)

MAKE-UP CREW HEAD.....Pei Ru Kwek (PO '16)
MAKE-UP CREW.....Shannon Washington (PO '13)
Kayla Imhoff (PZ '13)

Time: 1938 to 1985.
Place: Hamburg, Germany; Amsterdam; attic in England

Production Staff

Production Manager.....Jack R. Morones
Technical Director.....Steven Barr
Costume Shop Manager.....Suzanne Schultz Reed
Master Electrician/Audio Engineer.....Matt Gorka
Program Administrator.....Cathy Seaman
Theatre Department Office Secretary.....Mary T. Rosier
Academic Department Coordinator, Dance.....Myrna Cogley
Box Office Manager.....Gabriel Sandoval
Box Office Staff.....Erica Barnes, Claudia Crook, Sharmila Hoskins, Hannah Mason, Kim Mayo, Laura Steinroeder, Jessica Warren
House Managers.....Jessica Lewis, Katharine McGregor
Ushers.....Rachel Aronoff, Fiker Bekele, Tessa Bertozzi, Elise Boyd, Allegra Breedlove, Liana Cohen, Kulsim Ebrahim, Anne Fulton, Sharmila Hoskins, Rachel Jackson, Yi Li, Dixie Morrison, Cliff Mountjoy-Venning, Jason Xu, Sally Zhang
Stage Carpenters.....Kym Louie, Giselly Rodriguez
Scene Shop Assistants.....Benjamin De Winkle, Priscilla Fuentes, Karen Huddleston, Julius Kellinghusen, Andrew Kolczynski, Nicole Kowtko
Costume Shop Assistants.....Annie Brown, Hannah Brown, Catherine Chen, Cesia Dominguez-Lopez Liz Duda, Sydney Dyson, Tori Gaines, Emma Gosliner, Bethany Ho, Lauren Kim Amanda Leon, Rebekah Lim, Erica Reiss, Bouvier Robertson, Laura Steinroeder, Adina Wells, Lucas Wrench, Becca Yukman
Lighting/Audio.....Bridget Barnes, Michelle Chesley Hannah Gardenswatz, Abigail Jordan, Aiden Lukomnik, Ryland Millar
Research Assistants.....Allegra Breedlove, Trey Connet, Anthony Gomez, Manya Janowitz, Hanna Love, Kevin Nava, Kyle Redford
Office Assistants.....Cliff Mountjoy-Venning Kayla Rodriguez
Department Photographer/Publicity.....Dani Hernandez-Roach
Library Assistant.....Austin Abrams
Outreach Coordinator/Communications.....Angelica Townsend

SPECIAL THANKS
Professors Margaret Kemp (Voice for Actors)
Friederike von Schwerin-High (German)
Monique Saigal
Lynn Rapaport (Holocaust)
Zack Krasner (PO '13)
Adrien Redford

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